JOURNAL OF
DHARMA

TRENDS IN PHILOSOPHY IN THE THIRD MILLENNIUM

April-June 2009 Vol. 34, No. 2

JOURNAL OF DHARMA

Dharmaram Journal of Religions and Philosophies

EDITORIAL BOARD

Chief Editor: Saju Chackalackal, Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, P.O. Dharmaram College, 560 029 Bangalore, India. Tel: +91-80-41116263; 6111(office). Web: www.chackalackal.com; E-mail: saju@chackalackal.com

Associate Editors: Augustine Thottakara, *Dharmaram College, Bangalore*; J. G. Arapura, *McMaster, Hamilton, Canada*; Thomas Aykara, *CSR, Pariyaram*; Thomas Kadankavil, *Kottayam*; Thomas Kalam, *Bangalore*; Antony Kalliath, *NBCLC, Bangalore*; Thomas Manickam, *South Africa*; Thomas Manninezhath, *Namibia*; Kuncheria Pathil, *Jeevadhara, Kottayam*; Joseph Pathrapankal, *Anugraha, Kottayam*; William Sweet, *St. Francis Xavier University, Nova Scotia*; Kurian Kachappilly, *DVK, Bangalore*; Angela Wong Wai Ching, *Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong*; Mathew Chandrankunnel, *DVK, Bangalore*, Sebastian Alackapally, *DVK, Bangalore*, Jose Nadhikkara, *DVK, Bangalore*.

Board of Consultants: M. Amaladoss, *Vidyajyothi, Delhi*; J. P. Clayton, *Boston University, USA*; John Bowker, *Cambridge, UK*; Jung Young Lee, *Drew University, New Jersey*; Jyothi Sahi, *Bangalore*; G. J. Larson, *University of Indiana, USA*; Thomas Mampra, *Pune*; J. Masson, *Belgium*; Albert Nambiaprambil, *Upasana, Thodupuzha*; Oberhammer, *Vienna*; R. C. Pandey, *New Delhi*; Thomas Kochumuttom, *Risikesh*; Mathias Mundadan, *Jeevass, Aluva*; G. C. Nayak, *Bhubaneswar*; Raimundo Panikkar, *Barcelona, Spain*.

Book Review Editors: Mathias Mundadan and V. Venkatakrishna.

Executive Secretaries: Alex K. & Vincent N., DVK.

Journal of Dharma is a scholarly research publication of inter-religious studies on current issues of religion, philosophy, and theology. While the editors recognize the need for free expression of differing opinions by our collaborators and contributors within the natural limits of academic freedom and responsibility, they do not necessarily subscribe to their views.

JOURNAL OF DHARMA

April-June 2009 Vol. 34, No. 2

TRENDS IN PHILOSOPHY IN THE THIRD MILLENNIUM

Published by
Dharma Research Association
Centre for the Study of World Religions
DVK, Dharmaram College P. O.
Bangalore 560 029, India
Tel. +91-80-4111 6111; Fax: +91-80-4111 6000
Email: dharma@dvk.in
Website: www.dharma.dvk.in

Journal of Dharma 34, 2 (April-June 2009), 130

CONTENT

Editorial: Trends in Philosophy in the Third Millennium 131
Saju Chackalackal

1. Linguistic Turn and Philosophical Investigations 135
Jose Nandhikkara

2. An Iconic Turn in Philosophy 153
Babu Thaliath

3. Myth and Metaphor: An Exploration into the Ground and Principle of Knowing 169
Kamalini Anne Martin

4. Causal Horizons Research in Cosmology 185
Raphael Neelamkavil

5. Heuristic Epistemology to Limit Divisiveness 207
Malcolm C. C. Armstrong

6. Asian Philosophies for the Third Millennium 221
Maja Milčinski

7. Humankind versus Others-in-Law: Re-Visioning Levinas for a Postmodern Hierophany 233
T. J. Abraham

8. Philosophy and Ethics in Defence of a Culture of Life 247
Saju Chackalackal

Book Reviews 267

Journal of Dharma 34, 2 (April-June 2009), 131-134

Editorial

TRENDS IN PHILOSOPHY IN THE THIRD MILLENNIUM

Philosophy defies precise definition, as there are innumerable ways of doing philosophy. Human ingenuity being unlimited and philosophy being a fundamental discipline that attempts to identify the rules of intellectual application, from daily chorus to the most intricate mathematical formulations that attempt to explain the complex universe as well as the miniscule subatomic particles, it is natural that we have a lot of variety in philosophical endeavours. Although certain major schools of philosophy had turned out to be the key players in the arena of any given philosophical culture, a close perusal of the history of philosophy, be it in the East or in the West, indicates that philosophical speculation has been thriving precisely because of the great variety it facilitates. Of course, paying close attention to the variety would weaken the possibility of a generalisation on what exactly philosophy is.

Yet, why should there be an insistence that only one particular type can be qualified to be categorized as philosophy? Why not we include many other trends that are discarded by the so-called mainstream philosophy and philosophers? Instead of being discouraged with the lame excuse that such an inclusion would dilute the rigour of philosophy, readiness to include all varieties of human thought, be it mainstream or sub-stream or completely from outside the stream, I believe that such a move would pave the way for an inclusive understanding of what philosophy is. In fact, it would prepare the ground to conceive of a domain of philosophy which will truly be representative of human thinking, without tags being attached. Indeed, there is greater scope for a complementary approach, which would, in turn, enhance the humanity as well as the entire spectrum of reality. The age of sheer exclusivism is over, and the third millennium needs to be qualified as an era of inclusive approaches in philosophising.

Of late, it has become fashionable among all types of intellectuals, not only philosophers and theoreticians, but also the socialites and politicians, to be postmodern. It is true that philosophy has come of age, and has been successfully growing beyond the 'modern'. This new trend has been christened 'postmodern', and has developed, again, into a lot more varieties that would also, sometimes, defy any definitive

© 2009 *Journal of Dharma: Dharmaram Journal of Religions and Philosophies* (Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bangalore), ISSN: 0253-7222

categorization. While the rigorous quest for system building at the cost of genuine reality and a true understanding of reality has been identified as the main culprit in the 'modern', the postmoderns have been constantly attempting to shun and circumvent the 'systemic' approaches; although it has its own advantages, ultimately, such an attempt ends up as chasing a mirage.

Without conceding to the postmoderns in their attempt to exorcise the modern, I hold that human thought cannot function without patterns and structures, although I firmly believe that none of the patterns or structures could be true once and for all. Then, between the modern and the postmodern, or any other school of thought that would emerge in the course of the third millennium and beyond, what is philosophically feasible, to my mind, is the openness that any philosopher as well as philosophical system could entertain towards the others so much so that, while positively acknowledging the possibility of plurality of thought systems and philosophies, humanity would be benefited through the collaborative thinking. Leaving these newly emerging thought systems to interact with each other – not fighting against each other – would provide room for improvisation and, sometimes, natural elimination of one or the other defunct thought system or philosophy. Third millennium is the age of openness and freedom, not only in dealing with market economies and global politics, but primarily and fundamentally in the establishment, maintenance, and ongoing growth of philosophies and philosophical endeavours. Let the entire humanity take advantage of the human thought that has been evolving ever since it came into existence; let the spirit of openness and freedom of human thought thrive, giving rise to many more philosophies as the third millennium unfolds in the life of the entire creation. Indeed, in this context, we are happy that *Journal of Dharma*, in its thirty-fifth year of existence, is a link in carrying the processes of philosophizing forward.

This issue of *Journal of Dharma* attempts to focus on the various contemporary trends in philosophical search and research that go on in different parts of the world. Without pretending to be exhaustive or holistic, this collection of eight essays on "Trends in Philosophy in the Third Millennium" offers an understanding into some approaches of contemporary relevance. As philosophers have been trying to grapple with reality from different perspectives, that too from different backgrounds and with a variety of tools, their approaches continue to vary and each in turn offers a novel method in philosophizing. Not only the 'linguistic' and

'iconic' turns have been making strides in systematic philosophizing; there have been attempts to reinvent the importance of myth and metaphors in philosophical discourses. Further, as positive sciences move into the inner recesses of reality, positive responses are underway in the form of better understanding and cooperation, paving the way to bridge the traditional wedge and rivalry between philosophy and science. Moreover, as our understanding of the truth still seems to be incomplete, sincere students of philosophy are on the look out for more comprehensive theories, such as heuristic epistemology and others.

While a lot of innovative moves are taking place in the arena of philosophical research, side by side we also see fresh attempts to unravel the unseen dimensions of certain classical systems of thought, including religious philosophies. The traditional reluctance to include religious thought systems within the domains of philosophy seems to have been overcome, and many thinkers are now open to see the valid contributions made by religions to the development of human thought. Interestingly, some of the contemporary attempts to highlight 'postmodern' trends in philosophical speculation are found to have been already part of classical religious systems such as Confucianism and Daoism (this list could be extended further). Indeed, deeper research and better understanding of many thought systems facilitate admission of their richness as well as the possible enhancement of human culture on a wider spectrum.

Another key area where interest is rekindled in philosophy is the field of ethics. Although the postmodern trend is to overthrow any definitive systems and accepted norms, there is a resurgence of interest in normative ethics. This indicates that the humanity, in its ongoing search for meaning and relevance, is not ready to forgo rules and regulations; instead, there is an increasing tendency to reinvent meaning within the already accepted patterns. Yet, the contemporary ethical approaches do encounter a change in the approaches. For example, in place of the traditional emphasis on anthropocentric ethical paradigms, there is an increasing outcry to design normative ethics that pays equal attention to all living beings; in fact, it is a call for a holistic approach in ethics, an ethics that would establish itself amidst a culture of life that would not only have norms to protect the human species but every other species as well.

All these divergent and novel attempts in doing philosophy contribute to the overall enhancement of human thought, which, in turn, enhances the entire spectrum of reality through the agency of humanity. As

humanity is accessing a faster pace of growth in many realms of its existence, we may legitimately hope that a faster as well as qualitatively greater development in human thought would mark innovations in philosophy as well, thus facilitating a better grasp of the nature of reality and more effective means to respond to it.

As the unfolding of reality continues and as philosophy leads humanity to greater heights, it is with great expectation and good will that the *Journal of Dharma* is blessed in its new Chief Editor, Dr. Jose Nandhikkara. A proven academician and an erudite scholar, Dr. Nandhikkara has been teaching philosophy at Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bangalore and many other institutes in India for about a decade. His high profile academic training in India (Dharmaram), Rome (Gregorian), and England (Oxford and Warwick), and his philosophical expertise on Wittgensteinian thoughts on culture, philosophy, and religion add colourful feathers to the new office. While thanking all, i.e., the readers, well-wishers, and all the stakeholders of *Journal of Dharma*, for the unflinching support that has been extended to me over a period of past seven years, I wish Dr. Jose Nandhikkara, the new Chief Editor, all the best in his new office. Let his philosophical acumen and practical wisdom take the *Journal of Dharma* to newer and greater heights!

Saju Chackalackal
Chief Editor, JD

Journal of Dharma 34, 2 (April-June 2009), 135-151

LINGUISTIC TURN AND PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS

Jose Nandhikkara♦

1. Introduction

Language-use is such an impressive and fascinating human capacity that human beings are called *homo loquens* – speaking beings. Speaking is not only natural for human beings but also distinctive of human species, in fact, so distinctive that human being is defined in terms of the speaking: "man shows himself as the entity which talks."[1] Language enables human beings, thus, to be precisely that living being which they are: as the speaking beings, human beings are human. Language provides a determinative characteristic to human nature: "the ability to speak is what marks man as man" and, according to Heidegger, language is the "foundation of human being."[2]

Human languages are strikingly powerful and complex systems and are studied extensively by linguists, sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists, and philosophers. When studying a human language, linguists seek systematic explanations of its syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. Semantics developed in the 20th century applied formal, mathematical models for characterizing linguistic form and meaning. Psychology studies neuro-linguistic behaviour. Philosophical interest in language, while ancient and enduring, has blossomed anew in the 20th century so much so that the 20th century philosophy is characterised by a linguistic turn. Paying tribute to Gustav Bergmann, Richard Rorty used the

---

♦**Dr. Jose Nandhikkara** CMI, a specialist in Wittgensteinian philosophy, holds a Licentiate in Philosophy from Gregorian University, Rome, B.A. (Hons.) in Philosophy from Oxford University, and a Ph.D. from Warwick University, both in the UK. He lecturers on Philosophical Anthropology and Philosophical Theology at Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bangalore. He is also the director of the Centre for the Study of World Religions, DVK, Bangalore.

[1]Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson, New York: Harper Collins, 1962, 208.

[2]Martin Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, trans. P. D. Hertz, New York: Harper and Row, 191, 112.

© 2009 *Journal of Dharma: Dharmaram Journal of Religions and Philosophies* (Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bangalore), ISSN: 0253-7222

expression, 'linguistic turn' as the title of his 1967 anthology of essays.[3] He included members of the Vienna Circle, Wittgenstein and his followers, Oxford philosophers, and American philosophers associated with these groups (including Quine), as participants in "the most recent philosophical revolution."[4] The intense interest in, and meticulous attention to language and its uses are the dominant features of their philosophical speculations. According to them, philosophical problems are problems which may be solved (or dissolved) either by reforming language or by understanding more about the language we presently use. Philosophy became predominantly a "critique of language."[5] This is to be distinguished from the philosophy of language that tries to give a general account of what language is and how it functions, and show how meaning and truth are situated in the practices of linguistic communication.

It was traditionally held that "the study of philosophy has as its purpose to know not what people have thought, but rather the truth about the way things are."[6] This view, however, was replaced by the linguistic turn that philosophical problems are philosophers' problems – how philosophers speak about reality rather than reality itself. To put it succinctly, philosophical questions are questions about language. Philosophy began to dismiss its aspirations to disclose truths about reality, and insisting upon its restriction to the clarification of conceptual confusions. Philosophical problems were not about the extra-linguistic world at all; but about the meanings of words and disentangling of concepts through linguistic and logical analysis. The goal of philosophy is to understand the structure and articulations of our conceptual scheme, and the primary method of philosophy is to examine the uses of words that caused philosophical problems in the first place. Philosophy, in this view, does not contribute to human knowledge about reality like empirical sciences. According to Wittgenstein,

> The object of philosophy is the logical clarification of thoughts.
> Philosophy is not a theory but an activity.
> A philosophical work consists essentially of elucidations.

---

[3]G. Bergmann, *Logic and Reality*, Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1964, 177, cited in Rorty, *The Linguistic Turn*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967, 8f. (Introduction).

[4]Rorty, *The Linguistic Turn*, 13.

[5]L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus*, London: Routledge, 1922, 4.0031.

[6]Aquinas, *De caelo* I.22.228.

> The result of philosophy is not a number of 'philosophical propositions', but to make propositions clear.[7]

This is a contribution to a distinctive form of understanding.

Philosophers who are considered to have taken the linguistic turn held that advance in philosophical understanding is possible only with the propaedeutic of investigating the use of the words relevant to the problem at hand. The methodological role that language plays is applicable in various fields of philosophy such as epistemology, aesthetics, ethics, metaphysics, philosophy of religion, philosophy of science, and philosophy of mind. For example, language enters in the philosophical discussion on goodness when we observe that goodness is what is attributed when we say of a thing that 'it is good'. Tools from the philosophy of language make available quite a number of views about what various value statements mean and in general about how they do their expressive and communicative work; these views inform and support philosophical positions on respective topics of philosophical interest.

2. Progress in Science and Logic

Two reasons could be ascribed for the linguistic turn in the 20th century philosophy. First, due to the enormous success of science and technology, philosophers felt that the traditional philosophical territories were overtaken by science. Accordingly, the questions of metaphysics, epistemology, and philosophy of mind seemed to be better addressed by physics, physiology, and psychology, respectively, and the concerns of social and political philosophy were better left to sociology and political science. Since the task of acquiring knowledge about the world had been taken over by science, the only task that remained for philosophy, it was suggested, was to clarify meaning. According to Dummett, "Because philosophy has, as its first if not its only task, the analysis of meanings, and because, the deeper such analysis goes, the more it is dependent upon a correct general account of meaning, a model for what the understanding of an expression consists in, the theory of meaning, which is the search for such a model, is the foundation of all philosophy, and not epistemology as Descartes misled us into believing."[8] Accordingly, science is defined as the pursuit of truth and philosophy as the quest for meaning. In this regard, it was held that

---

[7]Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus*, 4.112.

[8]Dummett, *Frege: Philosophy of Language*, London: Duckworth, 1973, 669.

philosophical investigations are, in fact, grammatical investigations as semantics exhausts ontology.

Second, new and more powerful methods of logic had been developed in the twentieth century, which promised to solve or dissolve some of the perennial philosophical problems more objectively and scientifically. For the first time since the Middle Ages, there was a revival of interest in, and a philosophical preoccupation with the nature of formal logic. The invention of the first-order predicate calculus with identity was a stimulus both to further logical invention, e.g., of modal, tense, and deontic logics, and to philosophical investigation into the relationships between logic, language, and philosophy.

Following the lead by Gottlob Frege, Bertrand Russell, and Ludwig Wittgenstein, philosophers tried to construct systematic and logically rigorous accounts of thoughts and language. These philosophers found that everyday language is to be purified and refined before subjecting to the method of analysis. With an objective and universal grammar and dictionary, philosophers were in search of constructing a language of thought as opposed to ordinary languages. What is aimed at was a logically perfect language where the correspondence between word and reality could be set out clearly. In a logically perfect language, the words in a proposition would correspond one by one with components of the corresponding fact. By using such a language and asking exact questions, linguistic philosophers tried to solve or dissolve philosophical problems. As language is considered a human construct and true philosophical problems are linguistic problems, philosophers were confident that the problems could be solved/dissolved.[9]

3. Language and Philosophy: A Historical Review

Interest in language was not a twentieth century philosophical phenomenon. Throughout the history of Western Philosophy (and in the East as well) language always remained a fascinating topic of philosophical discourse and investigation. A brief historical survey. is undertaken here in view of clarifying the similarities and differences of the twentieth century linguistic turn.

Language, during the ancient Greek period, was largely used for the purpose of philosophical argumentation. The analysis of language

[9]In fact, Wittgenstein left philosophy claiming that he has solved all philosophical problems in essentials, in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, and engaged himself as a gardener, teacher, and architect in and around Vienna.

consisted in (1) how words acquire their semantic values and refer to objects and ideas, (2) how words combine to form larger semantic units – sentences, statements, or propositions, (3) how these units come to be truth-evaluable, and (4) how these units are related to the language-independent world. The dialectic between conventionalism and naturalism dominated the philosophical investigations on these questions. Plato agreed with the naturalists that there must be some natural relation between a name and the thing named; but he equally agreed with the conventionalists that convention is relevant to determining names. According to Aristotle, conventional semantic units (written marks and spoken sounds) receive their semantic significance from those things of which they are symbols: "words are signs of concepts."[10] A name is a significant sound according to convention; because no name is by nature significant, but only when it has become a symbol, and something is a symbol only when it stands in an appropriate relation to a non-conventional mental representation. Besides Plato and Aristotle, the Stoics, the Epicureans, and the Academics discussed language, meaning, and understanding, often reverting to earlier debates about natural versus conventional signification.

Medieval thinkers produced a vast literature on aspects of linguistic theory, following the ancient Greek and Latin authors: words acquire their meaning by an act of 'imposition' when a sound is marked as the name of some thing. Usually, three key ingredients are identified in signification: the word, a concept, and the thing signified. Concepts are understood as mental words. Because of the importance given to theology in medieval philosophy, special attention was paid to terms that referred to God and spiritual substances. Words have different contents when used as predicates of creatures and when predicated of the Creator. It was realized that speaker, listener, and context must be taken into account in order to explain how words can communicate something different from their primary sense, and how it is possible for a listener to grasp the intended sense of an ambiguous message. Words to have the relation of signification to things, they must also be related in a certain way (subordinated) to concepts. If concepts were what our words signify, then it seemed we would always be talking about mere psychological entities.

---

[10]Aristotle, *De interpretatione*, 16a 3-4.

The link between word and significate was generally held to be conventional.

Renaissance philosophy of language is a continuation of medieval philosophy of language with certain changes. First, humanism shifted the emphasis to the practical study of languages and, as a result, literary analysis and eloquent discourse were emphasized. Second, there was little discussion in logic texts of how words relate to each other in propositional contexts, and how sense and reference are affected by the presence of such logical terms as 'all', 'none', 'only', 'except', and so on. Finally, concepts themselves came in for more attention so that many of the topics discussed by logicians overlapped with what would now count as philosophy of mind as well as with metaphysics. The spoken language is thought to be conventional and the institution of language is guided by reason. To say that spoken words have signification by convention or agreement, however, does not mean that their signification is random and unmotivated.

The precise nature of the word-concept-thing relation was the focus of the long-standing debate whether spoken words signify concepts or things. Both concepts and things were made known by words. Some authors, following Aquinas, held that words primarily signified concepts and only secondarily signified things. Others, following William of Ockham, held that words signified things alone in virtue of being subordinated to concepts. According to Locke, interpersonal spoken communication works by speakers' translation of their internal mental vocabularies into sounds followed by hearers' re-translation into their own internal vocabularies. Descartes considered himself as a 'thinking thing' who is able to talk to himself about his experiences. He held that while he may be wrong in his judgments about the external world, he is infallibly correct on his judgements about his own sensations. It follows that one cannot apply with certainty sensation-words to other human beings other than oneself. In all such cases, the implication is that meaning is internal and language-use could in principle be private. The doctrine that the concept is a formal sign went hand-in-hand with the notion of mental language, a language of thought that is naturally significant and common to all human beings and all spoken language was subordinated to it.

4. Language of Thought

The 'language of thought' is a formal language that is postulated to be encoded in the brains of intelligent creatures as a vehicle for their thought.

According to this hypothesis, thinking consists in performing computations on sentences whose logico-syntactic parts are causally efficacious. Similar to the process of theorem-proving in logic, the language of thought proponents hold that the rules are applied by virtue of the causal structure of the brain. For example, where, in elementary logic, we follow the rule modus ponens – "From 'p' and 'If p then q' derive 'q'". According to the hypothesis, the brain is so constructed that, if it is in a state that represents the premises, then it enters a state that represents the conclusion. The different propositional attitudes of an agent involve different computational relations borne by the agent to sentences in a language of thought that express the various thought contents of the agent. Language works more like calculus.

The hypothesis is supported by the following properties. (1) People can, in principle, think all permissible combinations of the primitive syntactic elements. (2) Anyone who can think p can think any logical permutation of p. Both deductive reasoning and many common fallacies are 'structure-sensitive', involving the scopes of operators, for example, negations, conditionals, and quantifiers. Quantifier scope is what distinguishes, for example, 'Everyone loves someone' form 'There is someone whom everyone loves'. (3) Propositional-attitude ascriptions are 'intensional': terms that (even necessarily) refer to the very same thing cannot be substituted for one another without risking a change in the truth-value of the whole. There is a difference between thinking 'Water is wet', thinking 'H_2O is wet', and thinking 'The stuff of rain is wet', despite the fact that water = H_2O = the stuff of rain. (4) Different attitudes can be directed at the same thoughts. People often wish for the very same thing that they believe does not presently obtain; they often come to think what they previously only feared.

Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus* used an *a priori* logical method with the assumption that language must be purified and analysed to conform to the logician's ideals. Wittgenstein who had thought that problems of philosophy rested on "the misunderstanding of the logic of our language" and used the new logic as the depth grammar of any possible language was later to observe on such logical inventions: "Philosophers often behave like little children who scribble some marks on a piece of paper at random and then ask the grown-up 'What's that?."[11] In contrast, the *Investigations*

[11]Wittgenstein, MS 112, 58r, see The Big Typescript, 430.

used a descriptive method: "One cannot guess how a word functions. One has to look at its use and learn from that."[12] According to the *Tractatus*, philosophical problems arise because "the logic of our language is misunderstood." We have these problems, according to the *Investigations*, because "we do not command a clear view of the use of our words."[13] Though in both works he was concerned to find the limits of language and thought, in the *Investigations*, he moves from the realm of logic and form to that of ordinary language and actual use as the centre of the philosopher's attention and from an emphasis on definition and analysis to description of 'language-games', 'family resemblance', and 'stream of life'. According to later Wittgenstein, philosophical problems result mainly from linguistic confusions and are to be solved by clarification of the uses of words, not by logical reconstruction by a language of thought. So, the methods of philosophy shift from analysis to description. What philosophy should describe is the ordinary use of words: "Philosophy may in no way interfere with the actual use of language; it can in the end only describe it. For it cannot give it any foundation either. It leaves everything as it is."[14] Such a method of philosophising was attempted in post-war Oxford philosophy, often referred to as ordinary language philosophy.

5. Ordinary Language Philosophy

Ordinary language philosophy is a method of philosophising, which has as its principal goal the clarification of concepts by describing features of relevant words in ordinary or non-philosophical context. The uses in non-philosophical contexts are taken to be paradigmatic; it is in them that meaning has its original home. Though flourished between 1940 and 1965, at the University of Oxford, ordinary language philosophy goes back to Socrates. In order to understand what a cause is, or what truth or knowledge is, it makes sense to look at how people use the words 'cause', 'truth', and 'knowledge'. "When philosophers use a word – 'knowledge', 'being', 'object', 'I', 'proposition', 'name' – and try to grasp the essence of the thing, one must always ask oneself: is the word ever actually used in this way in the language-game which is its original home? – What we do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use."[15] Wittgenstein's point is that philosophers should investigate the meaning of

[12]Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1953, 340.
[13]Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 122.
[14]Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 124.
[15]Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 116.

something by investigating the use of words. This requires looking closely at language-games in which such words are actually used, and when they can and not be used, in order to understand the scope and limits of the concepts they express. Because ordinary language had to function efficiently for people in a vast variety of contexts and also because it had evolved over a very long period of time, over a vast number of people, it has many more uses than philosophers seem to limit. Wittgenstein thought that one of the big problems with classical philosophy was that philosophical language did not do any real work: "philosophical problems arise when language goes on holiday."[16]

A general objection to the ordinary language philosophy is that it talks only about words and not things. The claim that we find out something about a non-linguistic phenomenon by knowing more about linguistic phenomena is either an idle ceremony or a tautology that statements about 'X' can often be paraphrased as statements about X's, and conversely. According to Austin, however, "When we examine what we should say when, what words we should use in what situations, we are looking again not merely at words... but also at the realities we use the words to talk about: we are using a sharpened awareness of words to sharpen our perception of, though not as the final arbiter of, the phenomena."[17] Another complaint targeted the Oxonian ideal that philosophers should speak clearly and precisely. It was summarized in the slogan 'Clarity is not enough'. Ordinary language philosophers thought that one of the chief pitfalls of philosophy was the belief in and desire for systematization, a defect attributable to the desire to make philosophy a science. Wittgenstein always held that philosophy is not like science; it is either higher or lower. Ordinary language is the expression of a common sense view of the world that cannot be wrong in its basic components.

That we are *homo loquens* is not just a homely reminder of an empirical fact but an existentially fundamental fact of life that is given showing who we are and how we live. This is fundamental, meaning, it has something to do with the way we live. It is tempting to think that a human being first exists in himself and, then, for the sake of his growth and development, start using a language to enter into social contacts with others. Language use is, then, seen as something consequent and

[16]Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 38.

[17]J. L. Austin, *Philosophical Papers*, eds. J. O. Urmson and G. J. Warnock, London: Oxford University Press, 1970, 182.

contingent – an important addition – to being an individual. Such an approach tends to speak of *der Mensch* – an individual complete in itself and separate from others (things and persons). It is true that living human beings, like other animals, interact directly in a physico-biological way within the spatio-temporal environment. Human subjectivity is shown in the spatio-temporal world through one's substantial and creative presence and engagement with objects in the world. One is to be reminded, however, of the obvious fact that we are not just solitary individuals.[18] We are in collaboration and conversation with other human beings in an inter-subjective world. This is not just something additional and consequent, but something constitutive and existential of being human. A method that is suitable for matter-in-motion cannot capture things human and the language of physics is not sufficient for expressing the characteristics of being human. One has to see the fundamental similarities and differences in our engagement with things and other living human beings. Both of them constitute and shape our streams of life. Living human beings are not only rooted in the world of things but also formed by and extended to the world of persons. Language plays a fundamental role in this project and process.

Language, as we use it, is a fundamental human practice that is rooted in nature and developed in collaboration and conversation with fellow human beings. Language-use is neither an invention by an individual nor a gift from society. It is the development of natural propensities of living human beings, a joint venture of nature and nurture. Language-use is also neither a finished product nor is it unfinished; it is an open-ended process, like human beings who use language in various ways in the stream of life in conversation and collaboration with fellow human beings.

It is in the stream of human life, our common ways of acting that a rule and the act in accord with it make contact; a rule is described and the corresponding act is explained. For words have meaning only in the stream of life. Life in its variety and complexity is the conceptual framework of anything that is significantly human and this background is beyond a complete theoretical articulation. The simile of the stream shows the

[18] According to Wittgenstein, "The aspects of things that are most important for us are hidden because of their simplicity and familiarity. (One is unable to notice something – because it is always before one's eyes)." Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 129.

dynamic shape of our complicated forms of life. The stream is formed as it flows on and our concepts stand in the middle of it. Wittgenstein also uses the analogy of a weave: "Seeing life as a weave ... where one pattern is not always complete and is varied in a multiplicity of ways ... and is interwoven with many others."[19] The necessary stability of our lives is provided by the interweaving of the many patterns rather than by any one single pattern. Our language-use is both dynamic and stable and rests on agreement in our form of life,[20] which includes both agreements in actions and judgements. In learning language, thus, we do not merely learn the pronunciation, spelling and syntax of words, but the forms of life which make those sounds and ink marks the words they are, play their role in the respective language-games – asking, thanking, cursing, greeting, praying, etc.

6. "Language Relates to a Way of Living"[21]

The use of language is characteristically human. It relates to a way of living, how human beings live, move, and have their being in the world. It is a practice with characteristic elements of objectivity, regularity, and normativity. "Only in the practice of a language can a word have meaning."[22] What Wittgenstein wants to get across is that language-use takes place in the sphere of actual behaviour of living human beings and its foundations are in the stream of our lives. Neither the Cartesian *res cogitans*, nor the Platonic Ideas, nor even the world of objects provides the foundations for our language use. The bedrock of our practices, including language use, is the regularity of practice and agreement in acting and judgement. Unless there is regularity in the use of a word, it cannot function as a word in any language. "The phenomenon of language rests on regularity, on agreement in acting."[23] It is a regularity of our lives that is based on the regularity of nature. Though regularity of nature is necessary for language, it is not sufficient. For example, the sound of thunder is not the name of lightning. Some animals do make sounds in

---

[19]Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, eds. G. E M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967, 568, 569.

[20]Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 241.

[21]Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, eds. G. H. von Wright, R. Rhees, G. E. M. Anscombe, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978, 335.

[22]Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, 344.

[23]Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, 342.

relation to eating and courting. Yet we hesitate to call it a language; it is certainly very different from human language. Our language capacity, according to Wittgenstein, belongs to our nature as animals of a certain kind. "I want to regard man here as an animal; as a primitive being to which one grants instinct but not ratiocination... Language did not emerge from some kind of ratiocination."[24] Once language-games are established there are reasons. Though reasons are not the source of language-games, they are not without reasons. Moreover, children learn language from the grown-ups by being trained to its use. Language is, thus, a product of nature and nurture and could be seen as part of our second nature, after Wittgenstein.

Wittgenstein's point is that the bedrock of our linguistic use is our regularity and agreement in actions rather than ratiocination. "It is our acting, which lies at the bottom of the language-game."[25] The crucial point is the normativity that is shown by the agreement in acting and in judgements. "Here it is of the greatest importance that all of us, or the overwhelming number, agree on certain things. For example, I can be sure that the colour of this object will be called 'green' by most people who see it."[26] "If there was no agreement in what we call 'red', etc., etc., language would come to an end."[27] Without agreement the words would be meaningless; they would not be words but just sounds and ink marks. That is the problem for the private linguist. For him, "The sounds and marks would not have a meaning independent of his production of them – which comes to saying that would not have meaning in the sense that words have meaning."[28] If there were no overwhelming agreement in applying a word, it would have no role in a language. "If language is to be a means of communication there must be agreement not only in definitions but also (queer as this may sound) in judgments."[29] Communicability is a necessary characteristic of a word.

Both regularity and overwhelming agreement in judgements are to be seen as part of the framework on which the working of our language is

---

[24]Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, eds. G. E M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1969, 475.

[25]Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, 475, 204.

[26]Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, 342.

[27]Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, 196.

[28]N. Malcolm, *Wittgenstinian Themes: Essays,* 198-89, ed. G. H. von Wright, New York: Cornell University Press, 1995,165.

[29]Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 242.

based. They provide a system of co-ordinates for the practice of a language. This is not merely an epistemological point but a metaphysical aspect of there being any language use. Wittgenstein wrote: "Our language-game only works, of course, when a certain agreement prevails, but the concept of agreement does not enter into the language-game."[30] It is part of the framework of having any language. This is true also about regularity of practice. Regularity and agreement are not inserted between a word and meaning to bridge them. Meaning is not a Platonic, Cartesian, or social entity. It is our use of the word that is highlighted by drawing attention to the role of regularity and agreement of the members of a community. A community is not external to the word use; it is part of the characteristic surrounding and framework of language use.[31] They are interdependent.

First of all, if there are no similarities in the world, human beings could not see similarities and classify them; there would not be any language. Secondly, if there is no human being with capacities to see and judge similarities, there could not be any seeing of similarities and classification without which there could not be any language. "The seeing of similarities underpins patterns of language use" and these "patterns of word use ... emerge from our ongoing practice."[32] This is something fundamental to human living. Thirdly, if there are no human beings who quietly agree on a vast variety of judgements concerning regularity in nature and in human actions, there would not be any language because language as we have seen is a human practice and practices are by nature objective, regular, and normative. Languages are not human inventions or discoveries but practices that evolved as a joint venture of nature and nurture. Things are similar and they are seen and judged as similar, not by

---

[30]Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, 430.

[31]"It is of the greatest importance that a dispute hardly ever arises between people about whether the colour of this object is the same as the colour of that, the length of this rod the same as the length of that, etc. This peaceful agreement is the characteristic surrounding of the use of the word 'same'. And one must say something analogous about proceeding according to a rule. No dispute breaks out over the question whether a proceeding was according to the rule or not. It doesn't come to blows, for example. This belongs to the framework, out of which our language works (for example, gives a description)." Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, 323.

[32]M. Luntley, "Patterns, Particularism and Seeing the Similarity" in *Philosophical Papers*, November 2002, 274, 271.

just one individual but all of us or the vast majority of us who share in a form of life. Our concepts, in general, depend on the fact that human beings would respond in the same way (correspondingly or almost correspondingly) under the same circumstances, pressing for which (similarities, seeing similarities or judging similarities) is basic or reducing one to the other is a philosophical obsession rather than philosophical investigation. It is futile to separate between elements of nature and nurture in human practices. They are interwoven to give shape to our complicated forms of life.

"Wittgenstein's position is simply this: what I mean is determined by my natural use of words, so that we cannot sensibly ask whether my use really conforms to what my words mean."[33] My natural use of words is interwoven with the rest of my life. It is formed by nurture and becomes my second nature. Calibration is made possible by my regularity in patterns of use. Given the same training, human beings respond in certain regular ways; we agree in acting and in our judgements. Other beings may respond in different ways. It is also possible that a particular human being or a group of people may respond differently. "Such a case would present similarities with one in which a person naturally reacted to the gesture of pointing with the hand by looking in the direction of the line from finger-tip to wrist, not from wrist to finger-tip."[34] In such situations, there cannot be normative practices including language use.

Since language is a practice, regularity is essential to language use. "In order to describe the phenomenon of language one has to describe a practice, not a one-time occurrence, whatever it might be."[35] Of course, new words, like new rules, can be invented which are perhaps never used and yet could be understood. It would not be possible, however, if there were no use of words at all. Moreover, concepts are not for use on a single occasion; they must be repeatable. That does not mean that each word is actually used on a number of occasions by a number of people. There is an important distinction between regularity over time and place by repeatability of instances and regularity across persons who participate in a form of life. It is contingently possible that at a given time there is only one single person who is using a language. It can be taught and learned by other human agents. Possibility for multiplicity of instances is fundamental

---

[33]C. McGinn, *Wittgenstein on Meaning*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984, 87-88.
[34]Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 185.
[35]Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, 335.

to our language use. Language use cannot be logically restricted to one human being. A language that could not be shared (logically) is a philosophical chimera. For actual linguist use, we need at least the possibility of not only multiplicity of instances but also multiplicity of agents agreeing in judgements and sharing in a form of life. The participating agents must be able to see and judge similarities and act accordingly to form, what Wittgenstein calls, "the bustle/web/stream/form of life." We judge an action according to its background within the bustle of human life.

To the question, "How could human behaviour be described?" Wittgenstein answered: "Surely only by showing the actions of a variety of humans, as they are all mixed up together. Not what one man is doing now, but the whole hurly-burly, is the background against which we see an action, and it determines our judgment, our concepts, and our reactions."[36] Applying it to linguistic use, Malcolm wrote:

> To speak a language is to participate in a way of living in which many people are engaged. The language I speak gets its meaning from the common ways of acting and responding of many people. I take part in a game... To follow the rules for the use of an expression is nothing other than to use by those many people who take part in the activities in which the expression is embedded. Thus, the meaning of the expression is independent of me, or of any particular person; and this is why I can use the expression correctly or incorrectly. It has a meaning independent of my use of it.[37]

Wittgenstein himself admitted: "One can of course imagine someone who lives alone and sketches pictures of the objects around him (say on the walls of his cave), and his picture language could be easily understood."[38] According to Malcolm, Wittgenstein rejected the view that if a human infant grew up, by some strange chance, in complete isolation from any human society, this human being could, in his solitary existence, devise a language, a system of signs, which he could use to record observations, make predictions, set down rules for action for his own guidance and so on. If a rule is followed, it must be followed correctly. There must be a use

---

[36]Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, 567.

[37]Malcolm, *Wittgenstinian Themes: Essays,* 198-89, 164.

[38]"*Man kann sich doch einen Menschen vorstellen der allein lebt und Bilder von den Gegenständen um ihn her zeichnet (etwa an die Wände seiner Höhle) und seine Bildersprache ließe sich leicht verstehen.*" Wittgenstein, MS, 165, 105.

of the rule which is independent of this particular individual user, if correctly is to mean anything. In his view, this independent source of normativity is given by the community: "Any use of language at all presupposes a community in which there is agreement in the application of words and signs."[39] For our language use, according to his view, we need not only multiplicity of instances, "the whole hurly-burly of human actions" but also "the actions of a variety of humans, as they are all mixed up together."[40] Language, thus, relates to a way of living. Wittgenstein's remarks on language use and rule following, thus, form part of a philosophical anthropology showing how we live, move, and have our being.

7. Conclusion

"Know thyself!" is a fundamental philosophical quest and philosophy aims at providing an account of our own place in the world. The question is about the meaning of life and the answer is given in relation to nature, community, and often God. As this is given in language, philosophers of language focus on the interrelations and logical connections of mind, language, and the world. Philosophers who see understanding and use as the keys to linguistic meaning have held that the meaningfulness of language in some sense derives from mental content, perhaps including the contents of beliefs, thoughts, and concepts. If mind assigns meaning to language, so also language enables and shapes mind. Having language is so crucial to our ability to frame complex thoughts that many doubt whether language is prior to mind. Since language is the vehicle of our descriptions and explanations of reality, philosophers are concerned about what makes a true or apt characterization of reality.

The linguistic turn in the twentieth century initiated a new way of investigating philosophical problems. The Cartesian subjective turn to mental entities as philosophical data was a philosophical turn that produced more problems than it claimed to resolve. The linguistic turn also should not be seen as replacing concepts. *Homo loquens* do not replace *homo sapiens*. Both thinking and speaking are fundamental facts of a living human being. Philosophy has to see the living human being as the fundamental without reducing or denying other constitutive dimensions of human living. Linguistic turn made it imperative that philosophical

[39]Malcolm, *Wittgenstein: Nothing is Hidden: Wittgenstein's Criticism of His Early Thought*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986, 157.

[40]Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, 567.

questions are interrelated with questions on language. Metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, aesthetics, philosophy of mind, philosophy of religion, philosophy of science, etc., are interwoven with questions of language. Language is something fundamental: "Language is language."[41] It is not to be defined in terms of something other than itself, i.e., as human activity, in terms of phonetics and conventions, rather it is *saying* that shows.[42] The language use is not merely an external expression that requires intelligibility by appeal to something internal, because in that case the intelligibility of internal ideas and feelings requires the same kind of retrogressive explanation, and such regress, once started, could never find a final resting place. "Let language be experienced as language."[43]

---

[41]Heidegger, *Poetry, Language and Thought*, trans. A. Hofstadter, New York: Harper Collins, 1962, 191.

[42]"*Des Wesende der Sprache ist die Sage als die Zeige*." Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, trans. P. D. Hertz, New York: Harper and Row, 1971, 123.

[43]Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, 119.

Journal of Dharma 34, 2 (April-June 2009), 153-167

AN ICONIC TURN IN PHILOSOPHY

Babu Thaliath♦

1. Introduction

The term "iconic turn" (*Ikonische Wende*) was introduced in the 90s in a philosophical discourse by Gottfried Boehm. This phrase appeared for the first time in his treatise "Recurrence of Images" (*Wiederkehr der Bilder*), written as an introduction to a collection of essays, entitled *What Is an Image?* (*Was ist ein Bild*). This work, particularly the introduction of Boehm, has become in recent years propaedeutic to a discourse which finds resonance not only in the areas of philosophy and art theory, but also in various fields of natural and cultural sciences. The relevance and significance of this discourse has been established mainly through a series of lectures under the theme "Iconic Turn," organized since the winter semester 2001-2002 by the Hubert Burda Foundation at the Ludwig Maximillian University in Munich. The speakers were, apart from renowned art historians like Gottfried Boehm, Willibald Sauerländer, and Martin Kemp, also scholars from other philosophical and scientific disciplines as well as from art, such as Wim Wenders (Film Aesthetics), Alexander Kittler (Media Studies), John Michael Krois (Philosophy of Cultural Anthropology), Bill Viola (Video Artist), Heinz Otto Peitgen (Mathematics), Jan Assman (Egyptology), Wolf Singer (Neurosciences/ Philosophy), Lord Norman Foster (Architecture), and others.

2. Silent Logos

In his lecture ("*Jenseits der Sprache: Anmerkungen zur Logik der Bilder*") Gottfried Boehm attempts to define the iconic turn in terms of a *turn to images* (*Wende zum Bild*). Accordingly, Boehm begins his lecture by posing a fundamental question regarding the *logic of images*. I quote his first hypothetical observation: "*Bilder besitzen eine eigene, nur ihnen zugehörige*

♦**Dr. phil. Babu Thaliath**, Director of Research, Christ University, Bangalore, holds a PhD from Albert-Ludwigs-University, Freiburg i. Br., Germany. Currently he pursues his postdoctoral research at the Institute for Philosophy, Humboldt University Berlin, Germany, and has been a postdoctoral visiting scholar at the Department of History and Philosophy of Science, University of Cambridge, UK. His published works include, *Perspektivierung als Modalität der Symbolisierung: Erwin Panofskys Unternehmung zur Ausweitung und Präzisierung des Symbolisierungs-prozesses in der Philosophie der symbolischen Formen von Ernst Cassirer*, Würzburg 2005, and *Natur und Struktur der Kräfte* (Nature and Structure of Forces), Würzburg 2009.

© 2009 *Journal of Dharma: Dharmaram Journal of Religions and Philosophies* (Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bangalore). ISSN: 0253-7222

Logik. Unter Logik verstehen wir die konsistente Erzeugung vom Sinn aus genuine bildnerischen Mitteln. Diese Logik ist nicht prädikativ... Diese Logik wird nicht gesprochen, sie wird wahrnehmend realisiert."[1]

Boehm postulates a logic of images apparently to establish a logical foundation for the *iconic turn*, and clearly tries to introduce the image problem (*Bildfrage*) in a philosophical discourse.[2] A pictorial logic is, however, a *silent logic* (*stumme Logos*) and stays in contrast to linguistically-predicative logic. Boehm discusses the image problem, if we closely observe the development of his image theory in the last 30 years (since his dissertation *Studien zur Perspektive*[3]), predominantly in the framework of ontology. His basic question is: What is an image? The search for a logic of image is premised on it. Here it is not a question of *how* (*Wie-Frage*) but a question of *what* (*Was-Frage*) that has been clearly posed within an ontological context. Boehm attempts to derive the concept of an iconic turn – a rather prognostic point of view – programmatically from his basic philosophical notion of *iconic difference*. This is obviously analogous to the "ontological difference," a basic notion in Heidegger's *fundamental ontology*, as Boehm himself explains in his treatise. A second base of the *iconic turn* is the presumption of a historic deviation from the *linguistic turn*. Boehm conceives the iconic turn in principle as a necessary philosophical break with the linguistic turn. Therefore, he seeks in the discourse on iconic turn the possibility and legitimacy of a logic of images.

Before I explain the manifoldness of this notion and the possible impact of this radical view point in the fields of science, I would, first of all, closely examine its philosophical foundations, particularly the epistemological and ontological *motives* behind its emergence. In the first place, it is to be observed that the discourse on an iconic turn begins with a "*Was-Frage*," i.e., with question about the *being* (*Sein*) of image, and not

---

[1]"Images have their own logic. We understand this logic as consistent production of meaning from genuine visual means. This logic is not predicative... This logic is not spoken, it is perceptively realized" (Author's Translation).

[2]It is to be noted here that Gottfried Boehm initially studied philosophy in Heidelberg and worked under the renowned philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer in a doctoral research programme. He and Gadamer have had a long association both in academic research and publications – mostly in the field of Hermeneutics. However, over the years, Boehm tended to a Bildhermeneutik (Hermeneutics of Images) as compared to the text oriented Hermeneutics practised by most of the students of Gadamer.

[3]Gottfried Boehm, "*Studien zur Perspektivität*," *Philosophie und Kunst in der frühen Neuzeit*, Heidelberg: Winter 1969.

with a "*Wie-Frage*," which relates primarily to the *mode* of image. This implies that both the *iconic difference* and its prognostic derivative *iconic turn* form ontological notions. The analogy between an iconic difference and the ontological difference, as undertaken by Boehm in his treatise, shows how the notion of iconic difference is rooted in a Heideggerian fundamental ontology. Boehm, however, distances from a radical stance over *Fundamentalontologie*, he rather draws upon a revised form of Heideggerian ontology as represented in Gadamers Hermeneutics. Boehm deviates strategically from a text oriented or *logo-centric* Hermeneutics and tends towards a non-linguistic, i.e., *icono-centric* Hermeneutics. In this way, the *iconic turn* is also based on a revision of Gadamerian Hermeneutics as the ontology – as science of being – here is not restricted to logos alone but, in addition, extended to pre-logical and purely aesthetical foundations of perception.

Even as a student of Gadamer, Boehm distanced himself in his image theory – more precisely, in his question about the logic of images – from the conventional hermeneutics. In a well known treatise *Stumme Logos: Elemente einer Bildwissenschaft*,[4] Boehm observes that the images possess or express a silent logos. In Greek, the word '*logos*' means "the spoken word." The silent logo of images is not yet speechless; it has its own language. However, we do not hear what the images speak; we only *see* them. A unique logic underlies the silence of images. Here the notion of silent logos borders on metaphor; the discourse on silent logos is obviously metaphorical. This treatise attempts to translate the basic notion of silent logos, which characterizes the prognostic concept of *iconic turn*, into a philosophy, freeing it thus from its metaphoricity.

Philosophically considered, the iconic turn signals – after the linguistic turn – the resurgence of the long oppressed aesthetics, or rather their gradual triumph over the long reign of logic. The aforementioned treatise of Boehm, which prognoses an iconic turn is titled accordingly as *Die Wiederkehr der Bilder* (The recurrence of images). The notion of an iconic turn – similar to the notion of postmodernism – can primarily be taken as symptomatic. Which philosophical turn is here symptomatically implied? The iconic turn apparently signals in the history of philosophy the resurgence of epistemology after a long time of its suppression by a

[4]Gottfried Boehm, "*Der stumme Logos: Elemente einer Bildwissenschaft*," *Jahrbuch des Wissenschaftskollegs zu Berlin*, Berlin: Institute for Advanced Study, 2001/2002.

Heideggerian fundamental ontology. It is well known that Heidegger opposed the modern epistemology, especially the epistemological foundations of Kantian transcendental philosophy, by absolutizing the ontology (in a fundamental ontology) and by his radical scepticism about the modern science and technology. Heidegger seems to have ignored the Cartesian foundations of phenomenology in favour of an uncompromising *Seinslehre* (doctrine of being). According to Boehm, the phenomenology of Husserl has been significantly revised by Maurice Merleu-Ponty in his seminal work *Phenomenology of Perception*. Merleu-Ponty takes an interesting position in his philosophy which essentially deviates from the conventional phenomenology. That is to say that his phenomenology is not caught in a transcendental-subjective-intentionality but crosses over the bounds of subjectivity into the body. This transition can be observed as a strategic return from logic to aesthetics, i.e., to the sensory perceptions within the context of phenomenology. The perception is no longer subordinated to logical thinking; against thinking the perception attains epistemologically its autonomy and legitimacy.

3. The Iconic Difference

The foundation of *Iconic Turn* in phenomenology, in particular in its revision (how Boehm denotes it) by Merleu Ponty, also indicates its epistemological motives. *Iconic difference* can, indeed, be analogized to *ontological difference*, but this notion is based more on an epistemological and barely on an ontological *differentiation*. While the *ontological difference* emphasizes a fundamental distinction between the modes of being, i.e., between Being and being (*Sein und Dasein*), the *iconic difference* seems to imply a rather perceptional differentiation between purely logical and purely aesthetical domains of the subject. In other words, the iconic difference, as compared to the ontological difference, is based on an epistemological differentiation which, however, does not subject to a mere conventional philosophical epistemology but redefines epistemology itself in an indispensable unity with ontology. Iconic difference does not divide the existential modes of being apart: as against this, it isolates or rather frees the image – in general, the aesthetic element – from the dominance of a logic-abstract being (in an ontology). The iconic turn contrasts itself with a logical subject (or, more precisely, with the abstract logification of a subject that cognizes) by presupposing an aesthetically concretizing subjectivity.

The notions of *iconic difference* and *iconic turn* are apparently built on a peculiar contemplation of image, i.e., on an image theory that has ontological implications and, as such, cannot be merely reduced to a theory of perception. *Iconic turn* emphasizes a different mode of being; it implicates the appearance of Being in image. An obvious anti-platonic tendency is indicated where the image is dignified anew against a belittlement in its epistemological and ontological status in the platonic system. The Being seems thereby to regain the lost or suppressed aesthetical, i.e., visual base. Such a resurgence of images as carriers and testimonies of Being marks, however, not only a radical reversal of the *ontological* hierarchy of the spheres of Being (what Plato demonstrates in his sun, line, and cave parables), but also a clear epistemological return from the hegemony of *logos* to the truth of *aistheisis*. The truth of images is thereby dignified against the truth of logos that Plato absolutized in his philosophical system.

In platonic hierarchy of the phases of cognition, as represented clearly in line and cave parables, the image, which forms only a mimesis of a real appearance, has the lowest status of Being. The gradation of Being rises as we move from images to their objects, i.e., appearances, and further – in the sphere of visible objects – to axiomatic forms of objects (number, basic geometrical forms, etc.) finally to the ideas that form the realm of logos. This platonic hierarchy of Being is reversed in *iconic turn*. The gradation of Being rises if we move from logos towards images. Boehm's notion of an iconic turn is clearly based on the philosophy of his teacher, Hans-Georg Gadamer. In his seminal work *Truth and Methods* (*Wahrheit und Methode*), Gadamer speaks of a "valence of Being" (*Seinsvalenz*) that images represent, i.e., how the Being is elevated in an image. Moreover, this reversal has invariably a theological implication. In his dissertation, "Studies on Perspectives" (*Studien zur Perspektive*), Gottfried Boehm emphasizes how the art in the age of Renaissance central perspective became more aesthetically[5] oriented (*das Ästhetischwerden* der Kunst), indicating thus the symbolic significance of mimesis – imitation of nature – as philosophy of the Renaissance art in contrast to the sacramental art of the Middle Ages. In place of representing biblical motives, scenes from heaven and hell, etc., entered the purely mimetic representation of

[5]Here the term *aesthetics* denotes – true to the original meaning of aisthesis - the science of perception, particularly vision, and not the science of art as normally conceived.

nature and culture – or natural and cultural appearances – that are immediately perceived on earth. The leitmotif of aesthetisizing art implies clearly an *aesthetic turn* in Renaissance that found its profound expression not only in plastic art but also in different areas of culture – in the development of modern science and technology, particularly in the emergence of applied sciences. The aesthetic turn in Renaissance has also been discussed in a few seminal works of renowned art historians in the 20th century. In his treatise *Perspective as Symbolic Form*, Erwin Panofsky considers this epochal-symbolic development in plastic art and architecture, as represented adequately in the discovery of Renaissance central perspective, as the "end of theocracy" and, subsequently, as the "origin of anthropocracy."

4. Being as Embodiment

The iconic turn characterizes in principle a return to aistheisis – ontologically and epistemologically – as we have discussed earlier. It seems that the iconic turn is realized ontologically through a regression from Being to body and epistemologically through a regression from logos to image. Since it relates primarily to image, an epistemological regression in relation to an *iconic difference* is to be emphasized. Such an epistemological regression proves hardly to be ahistoric, as the thesis of Boehm holds, but invariably to be historic. Since the image forms first and foremost an object of vision, Boehm, in reference to a historicity of images, asks about the history of seeing. "Has seeing a history" is for Boehm a fundamental question; he deals with the actuality of this question in many of his treatises. Boehm seems even to consider the historicity of vision as a standard measure for the study of art history that covers predominantly the history of plastic art. According to Boehm, seeing does not prove to be ahistoric, but has a history. However, the historicity of vision refers not just to the history of plastic art but primarily to a philosophy of seeing which is premised on the notion of a regression from Logos to aisthesis.

The iconic turn prognoses an ontological and epistemological regression in which, on the one hand, the Being is identified in the very embodiment (and not in an immaterial *abstractum*) and, on the other, the truth and legitimacy of images are epistemologically conceded against the hegemony of logos which characterized from the outset the history of philosophy. Similar to the much acclaimed *linguistic turn*, *avant garde* as well as *postmodernism*, the iconic turn signals a radical break with the

tradition of modernity. Many of the philosophic, literary, and artistic movements in the 20th century were apparently characterized by the fact that they were grown out of a resistance to the modernity and its triumphant moves. A characteristic of this development is that it began to view, i.e., to interpret the tradition differently (an appropriate example would be Derrida's doctrine of *deconstruction* which is not restricted to postmodernism alone but extended, i.e., traced back to the entire tradition of western philosophy). In this regard, the iconic turn does not seem to be a radical break with the tradition or, on the contrary, its continuation, but a remarkable deviation from the long ruling modern subjectivism. Despite all the historically known refutations, confrontations, and major systematic reversals, we still live in the shadow of Plato. A general conviction grows since Nietzsche's radical confrontation with Platonism, that philosophy has once and for all said farewell to the traditional metaphysics or to the love for the *truth* (i.e., that which traditionally characterized philosophy). The more often they propagated *end of metaphysics*, which underlies – in the form of a leitmotif – almost all of the anti-metaphysical traditions of philosophy in our time, has found different expressions in modernism as well as in postmodernism. In an aphorism, "How the true world became a fable" (from *Twilight of Idols*), which apparently attempts to reverse the ontological and epistemological foundations of philosophy, initiated by Plato in the history of philosophy and sustained in the modernity, Nietzsche points to a radical change in our sensibility or rather in our worldview which would emerge as a consequence of this reversal: "... Demolishing the world of '*Schein*'." We should differentiate here a revisionist tendency in an attempt of reversal or restructuring from a radical and perfect break (with all its destructive features). A characteristic *turn* or reversal seems to facilitate us to *see* the past and present tradition in a different light, rather than to deny it. The discourse on a turn is, therefore, not a prognosis of a radical break with the past but a subtle pointer to certain differentiating tendencies in which the tradition advances ahead of its present state.

The *iconic turn* can be observed in this aspect as a significant deviation from the tradition but, at the same time, has recourse to it. In the already mentioned tendency to an epistemological return, the *iconic turn* represents a departure from the traditionally progressive epistemology; however, in its regress to the long suppressed aesthetic foundations, it actually points to a historic recourse. However, to what does the iconic

turn resort? Here, I would like to maintain that the iconic turn of our time would, in relation to its philosophic foundations, recourse to the aesthetic turn of early Modern Age. As already mentioned, the art historians has identified an aesthetic turn in the early Modern Age. An aesthetic turn is implied both in Panofsky's observation of a historic transition from theocracy to anthropocracy as well as in Boehm's notion of an aesthetisization (*Ästhetischwerden*) of art. However, it is subject not just to art historic consideration but predominantly to philosophic-theological contexts where it relates to the discovery of central perspective in Renaissance. Mimesis, as foundation of plastic art – particularly painting – seemed to have paved way for the aesthetic turn in which the sacramental art of Middle Ages crossed over to purely aesthetic mimesis. With that mimesis – as the perfect imitation of nature in immediate perception – became an important leitmotif of Renaissance which reinvented the antique in modern contexts. The technique of central perspective became the most significant instrument for the pictorial mimesis and, thereby, the pathfinder to the aesthetic turn of art.

However, we identify in modern philosophy a different direction or tendency which is opposed to aesthetics. From the Cartesian subjectivism to the Kantian transcendental philosophy the dominance of a logical subjectivity over the objectivity of the world had been established programmatically. Through his method of doubt, Descartes distinguishes between two irreducible spheres of reality, namely, the *res cogitans* and the *res extensa*. Mind whose existence can be ascertained only in the act of thinking, and the body whose existence is proven only in its spatial extension form the two foundational notions of Cartesian philosophy. The methodic doubt or negation, since its introduction by Descartes, has become one of the basic characteristics of modern epistemology. While Descartes used this method to perfectly separate irreducible spheres of reality, mind and body, Locke and Kant employed an epistemological method of negation to distinguish between the primary and secondary qualities of bodies. The perfect distinction between primary and secondary qualities was, in fact, introduced by Descartes himself (refer the second part of his major work, *Principles of Philosophy*, especially with the title *Principles of bodily things*). However, the Cartesian method of doubt aims principally at an ontological differentiation between the modes of existence of mind and body. We could hold that the methodic doubt in the Cartesian system is primarily an undertaking of ontological differentiation between the existentially irreducible spheres of being, mind and body, before this

method got established – also in the Cartesian system – rather as an epistemological tool to distinguish between the primary and secondary qualities. In both Locke's empiricism and in Kant's transcendentalism, the method of negation – in principle, a modification of the (Cartesian) method of doubt – became exclusively an epistemological tool.

In Descartes' system, the perfect distinction between mind and body as different modes of being is apparently a successful undertaking. However, Descartes necessarily fails in the application of this method in the case of the body which seems to *embody* the mind. This has influenced Merleu-Ponty as he revitalized the Cartesianism in a revised phenomenology of *bodily* perceptions. Through the radical method of doubt Descartes reduces the organic body to a mere functioning automation. Here, I would not like to discuss the philosophical implications of such a reduction. The isolation of body, as resulted from the Cartesian method of doubt, inaugurated a tendency in the tradition of modern philosophy to neglect the body or rather to subordinate its reality to the *certainty* of mind. Through his method of doubt Descartes could ontologically differentiate between the irreducible modes of being, mind, and body, but in the Cartesian system these perfectly distinguished entities do not seem to be equally considered or legitimized. In his epistemology, Descartes is obviously inclined to the dominance of mind or subject. Accordingly, the basic principle in the Cartesian epistemology is *cogito ergo sum* (I think, therefore, I am). The other irreducible mode of existence, namely, the body as *res extensa*, seems only to be a residue in his methodical doubt. Moreover, Descartes hardly distinguishes a purely spatial extension from bodily extension. In other words, Descartes does not observe space and body as essentially separable modes of being. For Descartes space cannot exist without body; spatial extension *is* invariably a bodily extension. Hence, in the Cartesian system, there are only two basic modes of being (or irreducible modes of existence) in the world: the immaterial and non-extended mind and extended (material) bodies.

The notion of identity between space and body, in which Descartes confronts the philosophical doctrine of void, as held in the Greek philosophy by Democritus, is more of a purely physical than a philosophical point of view. *Space in itself*, i.e., the space independent of the body, is here primarily a purely physical, but not a philosophical, i.e., ontological or epistemological impossibility. Although the science of physics is inevitably based on the philosophical epistemology, can

nevertheless a purely physical point of view be barely appropriated to its epistemological basis? Descartes' analogy between human body and a machine is a striking example for the subtle disparity between purely physical and philosophical-epistemological interpretation. The conception of space and body to be two essentially different modes of being is in principle an epistemological accomplishment that, as such, can be traced back to an ontological differentiation between space and bodies. The assumption of such an ontological differentiation between space and body seems to jeopardize the commonly accepted notion of physics, namely the *materiality* of space. How can the space which has no other qualities other than pure extension be an object of physics, as against the bodies that are composed of primary and secondary qualities?

The abstract space as a *space in itself* had always been considered to be a space in the systems of synthetic (Euclidian) as well as analytic (Cartesian) geometry. Only with the advent of applied sciences the space began to be considered as a purely physical entity. We are not discussing further the question about the distinction or the autonomy of space from the body. We deal with space insofar as it – since Descartes – formed the essential existential mode of bodies. The spatial extension of organic and inorganic bodies (including human bodies) can be observed philosophically – rather than physically – as the *limit* of bodily existence. That is to say, space or spatial extension has the main function to impart the bodies their existential bounds. In Cartesian dualism, the material body is *isolated* from the immaterial mind in its spatial extension. While Descartes emphasizes the undoubted existence of mind in the form of thinking alone (from which all the attributed primary and secondary qualities of bodies can be methodically distinguished, i.e., separated), he tends to isolate, on the other hand, the body *in itself* from the mind with regard to its existence *in space*. Here the spatial extension can be considered to be a carrier of all the causations that effectuate qualitative perceptions in mind. For bodies, the state of *being-isolated-in-space* would imply that they draw their existential limits against the subject that perceives them. In the Cartesian separation between mind and matter, the physical extension of bodies attains its isolation and autonomy from mind in their *spatiality* (i.e., spatial existence) alone.

But where is the mind, if not in space or, more precisely, in the spatially extended body? We easily identify that it is ultimately the body where the three already discussed irreducible basic modes of existence, namely, the mind, the matter, and the space come together and,

consequently, become an irresolvable problem in philosophical – ontological and epistemological – interpretations of mental phenomena. In Cartesian subjectivism, the being is conceived to be identical with the thought. The existence, the consciousness "I am" or "I exist," can finally be ascertained only through conscious thinking. The consciousness of existence and the consciousness of being are considered to be identical in a *process* of thinking, namely "I think." However, this existence indicates more than a being of merely thinking subject, *primarily* a bodily being, an embodiment which *is* and *becomes* in space and time. The bounds of this embodiment that imparts the body its existential autonomy, i.e., an existence *in itself*, are defined by the basic existential modes of bodies in space and time, namely, the spatiality and the temporality of embodiment. The fundamental notion in Cartesian system, "I think, therefore, I am," also negates the *necessary* existence of a spatially extended embodiment in which alone the mind can find its domicile.

5. The Aesthetic Turn

The separation between a *knowing subject* and a *known object* is characteristic for the modern philosophical tradition in general. The modal differentiation or rather polarization between the spheres of the subject and the object, which became propaedeutic to the Cartesian dualism and, as such, the foundation of Cartesian epistemology, does not seem to be a philosophically value-free project. A definite strategy of a worldview apparently underlies the Cartesian isolation of subject from the sphere of material objects. In every methodical and philosophic-propaedeutic differentiation between the spheres of being, as represented almost synonymously through the dualism of *subject and object* or *mind and body*, it is presupposed that these differentiated entities are considered equally. However, most of the modern philosophical distinctions between ontological and epistemological spheres or domains – in the form of dualisms – do not demonstrate such equality. One of the spheres of being is always favoured against the other (which remains differentiated and separated from it). Such favouritisms can become strategies of philosophizing.

Philosophizing is, paradoxically, not and never has been an undertaking where the philosophers searched for value-free knowledge based on purely theoretical premises. The project of philosophizing had always been motivated through subtle social and political interests. Philosophy aims primarily at the true knowledge of the nature of human

subjectivity and its functions of cognition and the world of objects that are cognized by the subject; however, the philosophizing proves often in the history to be a strategic undertaking, an undertaking in which not only a characteristic motive to philosophize for the sake of philosophizing, but also a strategy of a *will to philosophize* become evident. A definite strategy of philosophizing can be identified in the platonic reduction of appearances to mere images as against the *true* ideas as well as in his epistemological and ontological hierarchization of the spheres of being and cognition – from deceptive images to true ideas – as clearly represented in his sun, line, and cave parables.

In general, it is claimed that a pure, i.e., value-free pursuit of truth – to interpret the real world, the human cognition, etc. – underlies the desire to philosophize. We have inclined to see that such an ideal aspiration is accompanied by implicit and explicit strategies. Here one could ask whether the defining expression for philosophy, "*love* for truth," denotes ultimately a *strategy* for the truth. We owe Nietzsche the emphasis and legitimization of a strategy of philosophizing, as against the traditional and conventional *belief* in a pure value-free "love for truth" as the essence of philosophy. It was unique in the history of philosophy that a philosopher like Nietzsche confronted first and foremost not with the philosophies themselves – in the western as well as in the eastern tradition – but precisely with the strategies of philosophers (to philosophize, i.e., to create philosophical systems). As never before, this philosopher was able to diagnose various strategies of philosophizing – in contrast to a mere conventional acceptance or a rebellious rejection of the traditional foundations of philosophy – and designate them as the necessary propaedeutic to various philosophical systems.

Thus, Nietzsche diagnosed in the Platonic, Medieval-Aristotelian up till the modern tradition of philosophy, not to mention the oriental philosophies such as Buddhism or Brahmanism (especially Sankara's Advaita Vedanta) which are often discussed or rather criticized, a strategic hostility towards the body. However, we focus more on the philosophical foundations of these strategies (as emphasized by Nietzsche) and refrain from their religious implications. The notion of "back to body" was not a later development in Nietzsche's philosophy – in the form of a cultural-critical confrontation with the traditional religious and social moral. Already in one of the early works "On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense" (*Über Wahrheit und Lüge im außermoralischen Sinne*), Nietzsche

worked out the foundations of philosophical aestheticism in opposition to the platonic and modern traditions of philosophy.

As apparently a prognostic propaedeutic to an *aesthetic turn*, Nietzsche questions the traditionally ascribed legitimacy of language to be the adequate expression of reality and its truth. "Is language the adequate expression of all realities?"[6] This question makes us to observe how Nietzsche radically opposed the hegemony of the *logo* and, subsequently, all predicative logics in the Western tradition. According to Nietzsche, the language can hardly enable its creator (*Sprachbildner*, in other words, the individual that cognizes in logic-linguistic modes) to express the truth of the reality; language produces only metaphors in the form of representational cognition. Nietzsche regarded linguistically expressed truths as an *army of metaphors*;[7] he emphasized the metaphoricity of language – in clear contrast to its traditionally and conventionally attributed logicity. The process of language – the emergence of *terms* (*Begriffe*) – is, according to Nietzsche, a metaphoric process, i.e., a process in which one always creates metaphors. The metaphors arise in every phase of this transition process in which the cognizing subject synthesizes the heterogeneous and absolutely different processes of perception and cognition, e.g., a nerve stimulation (caused by the object) being transposed into an image and the image, in turn, imitated by a sound. In rejecting the pretentious claim that language adequately expresses the truth and emphasizing the metaphoricity of language, Nietzsche is inclined philosophically to the notion of an epistemological regression from subjective metaphoric to the *truth* of objects. Nietzsche, thus, attempts to strategically deconstruct the power of language in her claim to be the expression of truth by methodically returning from subjective *terms* to the

---

[6]Nietzsche, *Truth and Lie in the Extra-Moral Sense* (*Über Wahrheit und Lüge im aussermoralischen Sinne*), trans. Daniel Breazeale in *Truth and Philosophy: Selections from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the 1870s*, Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1979, 82.

[7]Nietzsche wrote: "What, then, is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms – in short, a sum of human relations which have been enhanced, transposed, and embellished poetically and rhetorically, and which after long use seem firm, canonical, and obligatory to a people: truths are illusions about which one has forgotten that this is what they are; metaphors which are worn out and without sensuous power; coins which have lost their pictures and now matter only as metal, no longer as coins." Nietzsche, *Truth and Lie in the Extra-Moral Sense*, 84.

primordiality or to a pre-predicative *original state* (*Urzustand*) of the objects. In this epistemological regression, Nietzsche tragically stumbles on the Kantian *thing-in-itself*, on the enigmatic and unknown X, that mysteriously affects the subject or produces in it sensations of an object. As a necessary strategy against this insurmountable limit in the Kantian transcendental philosophy, Nietzsche seems to revitalize or fundamentally revise a Cartesian dualism. Nietzsche separates the sphere of the subject radically from the sphere of the object and points between these spheres, as opposed to the entire tradition of western philosophy, no real causal nexus, no correctness and no expression, but "at the most an aesthetic relation": "... in any case, it seems to me that the correct perception – which would mean the adequate expression of an object in the subject – is a contradictory impossibility. For between two absolutely different spheres, as between subject and object, there is no causality, no correctness, and no expression; there is, at most, an aesthetic relation: I mean, a suggestive transference, a stammering translation into a completely foreign tongue – for which I there is required, in any case, a freely inventive intermediate sphere and mediating force."[8] Nietzsche's aestheticism is not a mere regression to object, i.e., from logical to purely aesthetical or bodily mode of being, but a reciprocal and, as such, playful correlation between the absolutely different spheres of subject and object. Accordingly, in his emphasis on an aesthetic relation which defines the mode of nexus between subject and object, Nietzsche seems to suggest an *aesthetic turn*, to be more precise, an epistemological turn back to the aeisthesis. Nowhere is this leitmotif in Nietzsche adequately represented as in one of the fundamental notions he introduces in his first seminal treatise, *Birth of Tragedy*: "*Nur als ästhetisches Phänomen ist das Dasein der Welt ewig gerechtfertigt.*"[9]

6. Conclusion

The iconic turn seems programmatically to be analogous to the historical aesthetic turn, but it differentiates itself from an epistemological accentuation that characterized the aesthetic turn from the outset. The iconic turn prognoses the recurrence of images, in whose manifestation the

---

[8]Nietzsche, *Truth and Lie in the Extra-Moral Sense*, 86.

[9]"Only as an aesthetic phenomenon is the existence of the world eternally justified." Nietzsche, *Birth of Tragedy* (*Geburt der Tragödie*), *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, vol. III, eds. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1967, 43.

Being triumphs. This indicates that the iconic turn principally refers to an *ontological turn* to the autonomy of the image – more precisely, to the autonomy of the image from the perceiving and knowing, i.e., cognizing subject. The iconic difference denotes, therefore, primarily the recurrence of images and furthermore the *seeing* that creates this phenomenon. The iconic difference that exemplarily characterizes the iconic turn is closely related to the ontological difference. Similarly, the silent logic, as represented in the logic of images, does not prove to be a philosophic-historical continuity of the science of logic, but points to a clear break with the tradition of philosophy which finally established the hegemony of logos, of the language. The silent logic of the image occurs obviously in the primordial domain of perception, i.e., in pure vision. In the generation of meaning, images do not correlate with a logical apprehension, but with a pre-logical and purely aesthetical subjectivity. As Boehm captures it, the logic of images "is not predicative (...) it is perceptively realized."[10] A basic notion of Wittgenstein could be reformulated with respect to the aesthetic turn (which underlies the iconic turn): The limits of my perception mean the limits of my world.[11]

---

[10]See footnote 1.

[11]Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*, London: Routledge Classics, 2001, 5.6.

Journal of Dharma 34, 2 (April-June 2009), 169-184

MYTH AND METAPHOR

An Exploration of the Ground and Principle of Knowing

Kamalini Anne Martin♦

1. Introduction

In the Greek heritage of the West, myth or mythos has always been in tension with reason or logos, which signified the rational and analytic modes of arriving at a true account of reality. In general, myth is a narrative that describes and portrays in symbolic language the origin of the basic elements and assumptions of a culture. Mythic narrative relates, for example, how the world began, how human beings and animals were created, and how certain customs, gestures, or forms of human activities originated. As myth is a narrative, many attempts to understand it have focused on its linguistic structure; for example, the meaning of myth is sought in the history and structure of the language itself.

One of the most famous proponents of myth as an example of the historical development of language was Friedrich Max Müller, a German scholar, whose major studies dealt with the religions and myths of India. For him, the mythical world was essentially a world of illusion and fantasy arising from ambiguities of language, signifying a mental defect. This reveals two common presuppositions: that 'right' language must be univocal and that reality must be restricted to that which immediately and tangibly given. "From this point of view," says Cassirer, "all artistic creation becomes a mere imitation ... [and] idealization itself is nothing but subjective misconception and falsification."[1] Recent approaches tend to treat myth more gently:

> ... after being declared a disease of language, a naïve animistic creation, a playful and debasing fancy, a projection of astral phenomena, a verbalization of ritual, or a fantasy related to a

♦**Dr. Kamalini Anne Martin**, BE, ME, PhD (Electronics and Computer Science), is pursuing her second PhD in Philosophy in the Faculty of Philosophy, Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bangalore, with a broader area of 'personhood' in German Idealism. Apart from a number of well-acclaimed scientific articles published in national and international journals, she has also worked for 23 years in the ISRO (Indian Space Research Organization) Satellite Centre, Bangalore, especially in the capacity of Head of Digital Communication Section.

[1]Ernst Cassirer, *Language and Myth*, trans. Suzzanne K. Langer, New York: Dover Publications Inc., republished from Harper & Bros., 1946, 6.

© 2009 *Journal of Dharma: Dharmaram Journal of Religions and Philosophies* (Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bangalore). ISSN: 0253-7222

> primordial parricide or to the collective unconscious – myth has begun to be understood in a more positive way. That is, myth has been seen either as a sacred story, model, and justification of a meaningful and creative human life; or as the expression of "primitive" but no less valid logical processes.[2]

For Claude Lévi-Strauss, myth represented a special case of linguistic usage, a third level beyond surface narrative and underlying structure. In myth, he discovered certain clusters of relationships that, although expressed in the narrative and dramatic content, obey the systematic order of the language's structure. He contended that the same logical form is at work in all languages and cultures, in scientific works and tribal myths alike. Provisionally, at the simplest level, mythical thought always progresses from the awareness of oppositions toward their resolution: contradictory relationships are identical inasmuch as they are self-contradictory in a similar way.[3] Lévi-Strauss believed that the human mind thinks fundamentally in these oppositions and their unification (the Hegelian thesis, antithesis, synthesis triad), and that these are what make meaning possible. Indeed, for Cassirer, opposition is not discovered in a domain but is seen everywhere as its "roots run deep into the subsoil of perception."[4]

Two orientations may be discerned in theories formulating the relation between myth and knowledge. In the first, myth is examined as an intellectual and logical concern (logos of mythos, that is, mythology). In the second, which is followed in this essay, myth is studied in its imaginative, intuitive meaning – either as a *mode* of perception distinguishable from the rational mode, or as one that *preceded* rational knowledge in human intellectual evolution, thus mythos as the ground of logos.

For Cassirer, the mythical view gives rise to the first manifestation of "symbolic form" in the dawn of human consciousness. "In particular, [symbolic forms] lie at a deeper, autonomous level of spiritual life which then gives rise to the more sophisticated forms by a dialectical developmental process. From mythical thought, religion and art develop;

---

[2]Mircea Eliade, "Myth in the Late Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries" [online].

[3]Levi Claude Levi-Strauss, "The Structural Study of Myth" (abridged version), (30 May 2009), http://courses.essex.ac.uk/lt/lt204/strauss.htm [online].

[4]Ernst Cassirer, *The Logic of the Humanities*, trans. Clarence Smith Howe, London: Yale University Press, 1960, 140.

from natural language, theoretical science develops."[5] Usener's "initial and portentous" work is quoted by Cassirer as follows:

> There have been long periods in mental evolution when the human mind was slowly labouring toward thought and conception and was following quite different laws of ideation and speech. Our epistemology will not have any real foundation until philology and mythology have revealed the processes of involuntary and unconscious conception. The chasm between specific perception and general concepts is far greater than our academic notions, and a language which does our thinking for us, lead us to suppose. It is so great that I cannot imagine how it could have been bridged, had not language itself, without man's conscious awareness, prepared and induced the process.[6]

Therefore, "all theoretical cognition takes its departure from a world already preformed by language."[7] This echoes Heidegger's dictum that it is not man who is the master of language but language remains the master of man,[8] while the 'chasm' between the specific and the general recalls Kant's schematism:

> This schematism of our understanding, in its application to appearances and their mere form, is an art concealed in the depths of the human soul, whose real modes of activity nature is hardly likely ever to allow us to discover, and to have open to our gaze (A141-2/B 180-1).[9]

In fact, Cassirer expands this 'schematism' into a much more comprehensive dialectical process, with applications in the wider fields of (practical) human life, culture. But how can we explore these depths, this inner dark ground? For it is not merely that it is dark, that is, inaccessible to the light of knowledge, it is, according to Cassirer, the very ground of

---

[5]*The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, s.v. "Ernst Cassirer," by Michael Friedman, http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/cassirer/.

[6]Cassirer, *Language and Myth*, 15-16, quoting Usener, *Götternamen, Versuch einer Lehre von der religiösen Begriffsbildung* (Bonn, 1896), 32.

[7]Cassirer, *Language and Myth*, 28.

[8]Martin Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," (25 May 2009), http://mysite.pratt.edu/~arch543p/readings/Heidegger.html.

[9]Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965, 183.

knowledge itself. But Usener advances an intriguing method, as it is summed up in his preface.

> Only through devoted preoccupation with the spiritual traces of vanished times ... can we train ourselves to feel with the past; then gradually sympathetic strains may be set in motion within us so that we find in our own consciousness the threads that link ancient and modern times... It would be a sad case for human knowledge if detailed research ipso facto fettered the mind and prevented it from seeking a synoptic vision. The deeper you delve, the more you may expect to be rewarded by general insight.[10]

Two remarkable points of interest emerge in this short passage. First, the implication that what is not accessible to 'abstract' knowledge could be 'extracted' from the depths by means of *sympathetic feeling*, and second that an increase in depth also results in an increase in width, that is, such feeling is not opposed to abstraction but aids it.

2. In the Beginning

According to Schelling, the meaning of mythology can only be the meaning of the *process* by which it emerges into being.[11] This process is independent of individual thought or will – it is not for the person to accept or reject the explosive and shocking series of representations. Mythological ideas are products of a consciousness subjected to the inmost process as an urgent and compelling new reality.

> It is not at all the things with which man deals in the mythological process by which the consciousness is moved, but rather it is the *powers arising in the interior of consciousness itself*... The contents of the process are not merely *imagined* potencies but rather the *potencies themselves* – which create consciousness and which create nature (because consciousness is only the end of nature) and for this reason are also actual powers. The mythological process does not have to do with natural *objects*, but rather with the pure creating potencies whose original product is consciousness itself.[12]

For Schelling, this emergence of mythology as the first manifestation of human consciousness marks the momentous event whereby the 'absolutely

---

[10]Cassirer, *Language and Myth*, 21.

[11]F. W. J. Schelling, *Historical-Critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology*, trans. Mason Richey and Markus Zisselsberger, New York: State University of New York Press, 2007, 135.

[12]Schelling, *Historical-Critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology*, 144.

pre-historical' age (evolution as natural history), transitions into the relatively prehistorical (where a plethora of events occurred which were not recorded except in the depths of human consciousness, and orally handed down through the spiritual energies of the Word), and thence into what is known as the historical age. In the transitional middle period where myths flourished and language developed, only language and consciousness commemorate the event recognized through crisis. Eric Gans proposes an "originary hypothesis" for the co-originality of language and human consciousness.

> ... the linguistic sign, unlike all previous modes of information transfer, from the persistence of subatomic structures through the genetic code to the evolution of signal systems among mammals, depends neither on hard-wired connections nor on learned associations but on the memory of a *historically specific* founding event. Animals learn from the past and plan for the future, but only humans experience *events*... If human monogenesis seems uncomfortably close to the biblical creation of man, it is because the biblical narrative expresses, in however unscientific a form, a truth of human origin that science has not yet faced up to: that it must have taken place in and as an event. The origin of the sign is the origin of a new symbolic consciousness, and this consciousness, even in its most rudimentary form, could not have emerged unconsciously...[13]

From now on, the event itself 'exists' only insofar as it is 'captured in a permanent re-presentation in human memory' (in an immaterial form which nevertheless persists, that is, it can be 're-called' if 'forgotten'). Consciousness is no more an unformed chaos of transient impressions. But the first impression of reality, the first self-consciousness awakening of 'I am' with the 'there is' appears to be a *coincidentia oppositorum*: a strange new mode of being, a super-abundant surplus of meaning that is most readily understood by image and symbol.

> The symbol reveals certain aspects of reality – the deepest aspects – which defy any other means of knowledge. Images, symbols and myths... respond to a need to fulfil a function, that of bringing to

[13]Eric Gans, "The Little Bang: The Early Origin of Language," *Anthropoetics* 5, 1 (Spring/Summer 1999), (4 July 2008), http://www.anthropoetics.ucla.edu/ap0501/gans.htm.

> light the most hidden modalities of being. Consequently, the study of them enables us to reach a better understanding of man.[14]

Cassirer also identifies the inmost core (original and universal talent) of the human mind as the power to form images. From this point of conscious human experience, since all thought involves symbolic expression, the symbolic form emerges as the power of the spoken *word*. The use of a person's name calls that person into mental presence: "Whatever has been fixed by a name, henceforth is not only real, but is Reality."[15] Not only names, but all symbolic forms must "first be emancipated from the common matrix of myth," says Cassirer.

> The original bond between the linguistic and the mythico-religious consciousness is primarily expressed in the fact that all verbal structures appear *as also* mythical entities endowed with mythical powers, that the Word, in fact, becomes a sort of primary force, in which all being and doing originate.[16]

Henceforth, the word is the revealer of reality. But this reality is not necessarily exactly analogous to the world of Nature. With the use of words, that is, the human world shifts into the mental plane.

3. Mythos and Logos

Myth cannot be translated, says Northrop Frye, as it is an integral element of literature. "No rendering of myth into conceptual language can serve as a full equivalent of its meaning."[17] If religious thought is considered mythic while scientific thought is the epitome of the abstract, the logical, the differences in usage of the language show that the two 'ways' point to altogether different realities. Eliade demonstrates this in his books.[18] Lonergan also declares that "the world of pure science and metaphysical thinking is somehow very different from the world of poetry and of

---

[14]Mircea Eliade, *Images and Symbols*, trans. Philip Mairet, London: Harvill Press, 1952, 12 & 15.

[15]Enrico Garzilli, *Circles without Center*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972, 42, quoting Cassirer, *Language and Myth*, 58.

[16]Cassirer, *Language and Myth*, 45.

[17]Garzilli, *Circles without Center*, 45, quoting Northrop Frye, *Fables of Identity*, New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1063, 32. Here, 'translation' means to restate in literal or scientific language. For Frye, this is not possible, whereas for Levi-Strauss, "the mythical value of the myth is preserved even through the worst translation" (remains non-literal, mythical).

[18]Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, trans. Willard Trask, New York: Harcourst, Brace & World, 1959, 14.

common sense."[19] The contrast between discursive, abstract, or logical thought and mythic thought is briefly summarized following Cassirer's description.[20]

Abstract and mediated apprehension differs from concrete, pure presentations embodied in the imagination (imagination as a mental presentation of dynamic audio-visual sequence evoking an arousal of intense feelings). The mythic narrative is typical of events of crisis, an upheaval of cosmic significance, uncontrollable and unpredictable. The deliberate rational flow is typical of stable situations: it reflects a controllable and predictable environment.

> Meaning is said to constitutive when it has become stabilized for any given generation. Stabilized meanings are mediated... and become embodied in the culture, institutions and technology... these affirmed meanings constitute reality for most people at that particular time.[21]

Deliberation is achieved by detachment, i.e., "a gradual shift from the direct relation between man and his environment to an indirect relation." Mediation in concept is followed in action by technology which provides 'effective' but potentially disastrous tools. The distance between the human and the environment is continually increased. But is it thinking that creates the language or is it the language that creates thinking and thence the act?

Human tools are regarded logically as products of mental creation, an aspect of mental formulation which for Kant, at least, is 'spontaneous'. Man, as 'enunciator of sentence' occupies a privileged position as judge and creator. In mythic thinking, a tool is never simply 'manufactured' but has its origin in the super-natural – it is a 'gift from above'; so also, language and myth are sensitive responses to spiritual excitement, a witness to the 'Other'.

Abstract thought is sharply analytical, tending to resolve everything into its smallest possible part or functional step. Mythic thought is 'complex' in that it is yet 'unpacked' – its images, therefore, cannot be categorized or understood by general concepts. For mythic consciousness, any and every familiar physical aspect of the environment can take on a

---

[19]Lonergan, *Insight*, 547, cited in Garzilli, *Circles without Center*, 44.

[20]Cassirer, *Language and Myth*, 56 ff.

[21]Mary Gerhart and Allan Russell, *Metaphoric Process: The Creation of Scientific and Religious Understanding*, Fort Worth, USA: Texan Christian University Press, 1984, 64.

spiritual meaning that is startlingly strange, that can impact itself with extraordinarily intense force so as to arouse the mythic imagination and lift it above common experience.

Abstract thought focuses on 'what' it sees while mythic thought does not focus but directs attention to a 'way' of seeing. It is in this *way* that language 'produces' an organization of reality that makes the positing of attributes possible. Cassirer elaborates this point in detail. Given that "the concept (*notio, conceptus*) is that idea which represents the totality of essential properties,"[22] *how* is it that we so effortlessly recognize 'properties' at all? Properties, qualities, names, nouns, verbs, actions, laws – all these are components of thought that emerge through centuries of cultural training.

Yet, if mythic thought is co-original with language, language with the human mind, and the mind with the 'self',[23] then mythic thought that is, the first symbolic form, is the condition of possibility for abstract thought to develop. But then how is it that abstract thought rejects its own ground?

4. Metaphoric Reality

The same opposition that Levi-Strauss found in the structure of myth is found in metaphor. Lonergan's known-unknown expressing mediation between intellect and affect, image and reality is typical of both myth and metaphor. Thus, myth is the "anticipated and expanded metaphor" and metaphor is the "revised and contracted myth."[24] In general, it is agreed that while religious thought is usually saturated with metaphor (and myth), scientific thought is by no means devoid of it. Indeed, some authors claim that all language is metaphoric at least in origin.

Metaphoric language is provocative and creative – depending on its usage it provokes thought, imagination, and emotion.

> In the case of metaphor, this re-description [of reality] is guided by the interplay between differences and resemblances that gives rise to the tension at the level of the utterance. It is precisely from this tensive apprehension that a new vision of reality springs forth, which ordinary vision resists because it is attached to the ordinary use of

---

[22]Cassirer, *Language and Myth*, 24.

[23]F. W. J. Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism (1800)*, trans. P. Heath. Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 1978, Part One, Section II.

[24]Bernard J-F. Lonergan, *Insight: A study of human understanding*, London: Longmans & Green, 1957, 545.

> words. The eclipse of the objective, manipulatable world thus makes way for the revelation of a new dimension of reality and truth. [25]

Colin Turbayne and Philip Wheelwright stress the importance of metaphor in bringing forth new meanings for words or phrases. They also represent two opposed views on the relation between metaphors and reality. For Turbayne, a person who takes a metaphor in the literal sense has become a 'victim' of metaphor.

> The victim of metaphor accepts one way of sorting or building or allocating the facts as the only way to sort, bundle, or allocate them. The victim not only has a special view of the world but regards it as the only view, or rather, he confuses a special view of the world with the world.

Turbayne emphasizes that metaphor must not be taken literally, that is, it is not the literal truth but a make-believe feature, an 'as-if'. Following this line of thought, MacCormac states: "Myth is the mistaken attribution of reality to a diaphoric metaphor."[26] It is formed when a 'tentative' or 'speculative' or 'hypothetical' explanation is taken to be the 'literal' truth. Obviously, for MacCormac, the only truth is the 'literal truth', that is, what is scientifically proven, while metaphor is the 'as-if' that merely suggests. Is not this a falling victim to *literal* language? or in Turbayne's own words, assuming it as the only view, confusing this view of the world with the world.

Wheelwright emphasizes that reality surpasses every description. The living and dynamic interaction of self with reality can never be captured by words. Thus, through metaphor we become capable of being *intimately* connected, experience the presence of the-other-than-us and we participate with reality in an inexhaustible variety of ways. Two dimensions of metaphor derived from Aristotle's definitions are epiphor – standing for "the outreach and extension of meaning through comparison" – and diaphor – meaning "the creation of a new meaning by juxtaposition or synthesis." Put together, these 'enliven' language so that it, like the reality it depicts (or creates, according to Cassirer), becomes inexhaustible.

Ricoeur brings out a new understanding of sense and of reference, of imagination, and of feeling, in his book, *The Rule of Metaphor* ('Rule' as

---

[25]Gabriel Furmuzachi, "On Metaphor" (25 May 2009), http://www.geocities.com/aga_10/3.htm.

[26]Earl R. MacCormac, *Metaphor and Myth in Science and Religion*, Durham, USA: Duke University Press, 1976, 102.

in the living reign). In order to know how metaphors relate to reality we have to find out first to what they refer. A reference is demanded by the intention of the speaker of the sentence, which, according to Frege, is "the striving for truth." For Frege, the reference is communication from the proper name to the entire proposition..., [while] for Benveniste, the reference is communicated from the entire sentence to the word. The two are complementary and reciprocal conceptions of reference, and for Ricouer, this interplay, this two way action is typical metaphor's 'split-reference'.[27] The literal meaning is absurd in metaphor. A new structure is made visible as the metaphor emerges on the ruins of the previous structure to which the remote ideas previously belonged. This double-sense of double reality, says Ricouer, is "cogently exposed in the preambles to fairy tales of various peoples, for instance ... the Majorca storytellers: "*Aixo era y no era*" (it was and it was not)."[28]

Metaphor raises reciprocity from confusion to tension between opposites, and then reconciles opposition. Tension could exist within a (metaphorical) statement, between two interpretations (literal and metaphorical) or as tension between identity and difference in the interplay of resemblance. This tension is inherent in the copula 'is' or the verb 'to be' which "does not distinguish between the relational and the existential," according to Cassirer.[29] This cannot be removed; "it underlines the inescapably paradoxical character surrounding a metaphorical concept of truth."[30]

5. Resolving Opposition by Analysis

"Scientists who wish to formulate new theories that are hypothetical and intelligible almost inevitably must resort to the use of metaphor."[31] New mediation between experience and understanding results in a coherent enlargement of the world of meanings by a new concept. This has been variously termed as discovery, induction, and revelation. In particular, it is a startlingly new perspective on w*hat has already been accepted and* '*stabilised*', and very frequently involves 'deconstruction' or, indeed, a

---

[27]Paul Ricouer, *The Rule of Metaphor*, trans. Robert Czerny, et al., London: Routledge Classics, First Indian Reprint, 2004, 264 ff.

[28]Ricouer, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 265.

[29]Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, vol. 1, ch. 5, cited in Ricouer, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 292-293.

[30]Ricouer, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 302.

[31]MacCormac, *Metaphor and Myth in Science and Religion*, 138.

destruction of the old views. Here, this type of experience is called "limit-experience,"[32] differing in the immediate experience that does not modify understanding. The paradigmatic example is Archimedes' "Eureka!" But such a sudden jump is not the only way by which concepts are formed. Typically for Kant,

> Reflection (*reflexio*) does not concern itself with objects themselves with a view to deriving concepts from them directly, but is that state of mind in which we first set ourselves to discover the subjective conditions under which [alone] we are able to arrive at concepts. It is the consciousness of the relation of given representations to our different sources of knowledge; and only by way of such consciousness can the relation of the sources of knowledge to one another be rightly determined (B316).[33]

This slow, steady, and careful accumulation, with almost imperceptible shifts in alteration of meaning is the necessary prelude and aftermath of the shocking new *way of seeing*, understandably emphasized in science.

There is a surprising *absence of tension* in this description – there is no conflict here in understanding reality, whether at the point of modification or in the periods of consolidation. Analytic detachment appears to have solved the opposition in perception that metaphor so eloquently demonstrates.

> Science is the system of inter-subjectively valid statements. If our interpretation, that physicalistic language is the only inter-subjective language, is correct, it follows that physicalistic language is the language of science... It is also universal, i.e., each of its sentences is translatable; what is untranslatable comes to nothing whatever...[34]

What has been lost by a univocal, fully translatable, codified language is the surplus of meaning inherent in creative imagination. Such a surplus demands interpretation, according to Ricoeur, and "every hermeneutics is,

---

[32]Gerhart and Russell, *Metaphoric Process*, 70, quoting David Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order: The New Pluralism in Theology*, New York: The Seabury Press, 1975, ch. 5, 91-118.

[33]Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 276. Usener's 'sympathetic feeling' by which knowledge is extracted (section 2 above) is also elaborated as 'accord' in Kant's third *Critique* §§9, 27, and 37, in reflective judgment, but in the context of aesthetics only.

[34]Rudolf Carnap, "*Physicalische Sprache als Universalsprache der Wissenschaft*," *Erkenntnis* 2 (1932), 441 ff., cited in Cassirer, *Logic of the Humanities*, 96.

thus, explicitly or implicitly, self-understanding by means of understanding others."[35]

6. Resolving Opposition by Synthesis

"Poetic feeling itself also develops an experience of reality ... where creation and revelation coincide."[36] Myth and religion have their origin in feeling, and they promote a feeling of solidarity and unity of all forms of life. Feeling is not simply extreme emotion, but is a continuous substratum, a mood or 'state of soul', a way of finding oneself in the midst of reality.[37] Feeling lies at the inmost 'depths' of human consciousness, that is, in mythic consciousness and permeates all awareness.

> The world of myth is a dramatic world – a world of actions, of forces, of conflicting powers... Mythical perception is always impregnated with these emotional qualities. Whatever is seen or felt is surrounded by a special atmosphere – atmosphere of joy or grief, of anguish, of excitement, of exultation or depression... All the efforts of scientific thoughts are directed to the aim of obliterating every trace of this first view ... [but] every feature of our human experience has a claim to reality.[38]

Emotion has also been seen as a 'feminine weakness' (for example, Nietzsche). It is feared because it irrupts suddenly, uncontrollably, unpredictably, and is typically fleeting. Science rightly rejects bias and prejudice. But can these be eliminated by eliminating emotion, and can emotion be eliminated by eliminating the 'subject' from the objective view? There are notions that language has done something similar:

> By giving a 'name' to things by means of 'single words', probably a million and a half years ago..., the Hominid of the Lower Paleolithic began to achieve increasing independence from objects. In accordance with arguments put forward by Bronowski and Bellugi, who claimed that in epigenesis *language carried out the task of restraining and cleansing the content of communication from the emotional pressures of the limbic system, controlling emotive*

---

[35]Paul Ricouer, *The Conflict of Interpretations*, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin, ed. Don Hide, Evanston: NorthWestern University Press, 1974, 17.

[36]Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 291.

[37]Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 271. Ricoeur recalls Heidegger's 'attunement' but does not follow Heidegger's view of being-in-the-world.

[38]Ernst Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964, Yale Paperbound, 1968, 76-77.

> *afferences in order to use them to link past and present experiences...*[39]

On the other hand, "To mythical and religious feeling nature becomes one great society, the *society of life.*"[40]

> Primitive man's view of nature is neither theoretical nor merely practical; it is sympathetic... A deep conviction of a fundamental and indelible *solidarity of life* bridges over the multiplicity and variety of the single forms. He does not ascribe to himself a unique and privileged place in the scale of nature.[41]

Cassirer heartily endorses Durkheim's view that "Not nature but society is the true model of the myth. All its fundamental motives are projections of man's social life.[42] So also, for Gans, only culture is concerned with human interaction.[43] Human interaction is involvement with the other, a being-with.

The shift is in the 'you'-perspective from the 'it'-perspective of science. This view treats the other as a being (not necessarily living – it is noticeable that *any* and all parts of nature are equally venerated in myth). Moreover, all nature is vibrant with life, spirit. Nature provokes but also responds to human beings, though (or perhaps because?) there is no attempt on either side to control or subordinate the other. There is no rigid 'right' relationship,

> ... [N]o fixed, self-enclosed 'I', which in association with a similar 'you' seeks to penetrate into its sphere as if from outside... [Both arise] in the meeting point of the reciprocal *transaction*, which consummates itself in speech, in artistic creation... [I]n the beginning is the act... in speech, in artistic creation, in process of thought there is expressed a specific *activity*. And only in this

---

[39]Tiziano Telleschi, "Origins of language and of society-culture relationships," in *Becoming Loquens*, B. H. Bichakjian, et al, eds., Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2000, 75-100, cited in Eric Gans, "What's New and Old about the Origin of Language (I)" (4 July 2008), http://www.anthropoetics.ucla.edu/views/vw283.htm; emphasis added. 'Afference' stands for the reception by the brain of signals originating in sensory organs, here, the limbic system.

[40]Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, 110.

[41]Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, 82.

[42]Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, 70.

[43]Gans, "The Little Bang" [online].

> activity do the 'I' and the 'you' exist with the possibility of simultaneously distinguishing themselves from each other.[44]

The 'natural' relationship between an infant and her family is one of participation, without a clear distinction of the 'I' and the 'you' within the inter-subjective experience. In fact, it is noted that the child and the mother mimic each other in loving delight. Chatterjee quotes extensively from Max Scheler to elaborate this view.

> ... [I]n the beginning we live more in others than in ourselves. This we do, not by the method of intellection which encounters objects over and against it, but by that of "entering into" and participation. The small child "knows" his family in this way, and this is a "knowing" which is at the same time a "feeling." The person, in fact, is only accessible through participation which is "distinct from and in no way based upon perception," and participation can be described as the only way "whereby one essentially spiritual being can enter into the life of another one."[45]

What is gained by this involvement is self-knowledge, self-creation: "the self which is knowing is at the same time affirmed by the other. The love which is knowledge then, discovers both kinship and difference ... *to understand others is to understand ourselves.*"[46]

7. The Principle of Knowing

Eliade describes the sacrality of space, time, nature, history, and human life. For a religious man, space is not homogenous but centred and founded, oriented to the 'point' of its origin where creation began. Time too is not homogenous but repeatable and reversible: "It is ontological, Parmenidean time; it always remains equal to itself, it neither changes nor is exhausted, capable of *being made present by the rite or festival*... Time constitutes man's deepest existential dimension... [For] nonreligious man, temporal rhythms always represent a human experience, in which there is no room for any divine presence."[47]

The utter conviction of the mythic story teller is only matched by his seriousness. Not only is all authority relegated to the sacred Other so that

---

[44]Cassirer, *Logic of the Humanities*, 109.

[45]Margaret Chatterjee, *Our Knowledge of Other Selves*, Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1963, 153, Quoting Max Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, trans. Peter Heath, New York: Archon Books, 1970, 246.

[46]Chatterjee, *Our Knowledge of Other Selves*, 167, 154.

[47]Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 69 ff.

the story is *true*, pointing to a sacred reality that is different yet similar to Nature as we know it; this story has a definite purpose. This is the enactment of the split reality of metaphor by ritual. "*One becomes truly a man only by conforming to the teaching of the myths, that is, by imitating the gods.*"[48]

How does one imitate the gods? Aristotle's notion of entelechy was discarded when nature was 'seen' as deterministic and mechanical. Various theories, like Hans Driesch's vitalism, have been completely ignored by science. Nevertheless, evolutionary theories today do demonstrate that every single living cell is capable of 'intelligent' growth and 'intelligent' interaction with its environment in a self-creating, self-organizing *drive*. As Aristotle states, "Each natural organism has within it a desire to do those things necessary to realizing and maintaining its form. This desire is part of the organism's form or nature itself: form is a force in the organism for the realization and maintenance of form."[49] Jonathan Lear describes this driving force in the paradoxical conception of man as driven by his nature to *transcend* his nature. Aristotle is attributing to us a desire, a force, which urges us on toward *knowledge*. "It is in this divine transcendence of his own nature that man fully realizes himself... Man has a desire to understand, which, if satisfied, pulls him right out of human life into a divine existence. God is a principle of heaven and nature: Aristotle calls him *a way of life*."[50]

8. Conclusion

At the point where natural consciousness first becomes self-consciousness, human, the self-creating word, mythos and logos are one. Thus, "the language of the myth and the language of self are identical."[51] The self that is elevated, in this manner, to an intelligence is, therefore, thrown into a perpetual state of expansion and contraction; but this state is precisely that of imaging and producing.[52]

---

[48]Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane,* 100.

[49]Jonathan Lear, *Aristotle: The Desire to Understand*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, 295, quoting Aristotle's *De Anima* II.4, 415a26-b7.

[50]Lear, *Aristotle*, 9-10, and 297, translating *diagógē* as 'way of life' from *Metaphysics* xii.7, 1072b14.

[51]Garzilli, *Circles without Center*, 39. Here the author makes this statement in the context of speaking of the different approaches to myth (Cassirer, Levi-Strauss, Frye, etc.) that converge at one point.

[52]Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism*, 75.

But the mythical world, most obviously, is a pretence and a make-believe. Any 'explanation' of a myth, whether medieval allegory or modern 'mapping', somehow results in a negation of mythic phenomena. Literal language destroys creativity. Conflict and its resolution appear to be the only way to read myth and metaphor. For Cassirer, creative imagination is the key. The Word has to be conceived in the mythic mode carrying spiritual power before thought itself evolves into an 'ideal instrument', "a fundamental function in the construction and development of spiritual reality."[53]

There are two ways of seeing the same reality, two realities, inner and outer tensions. These are products of self becoming conscious of itself. Tension in perception can be removed by one way of seeing one reality. This occurs in all walks of life, and is not exclusive to the scientist. Excess emotion, even a feeling-with, can lead to mob fury and fanaticism. It is the recognition of the unique worth and dignity of the Other, the 'you-view', that is needed in both thinking and feeling. "The search for man's identity is founded on his oneness and his participation in nature, not on his opposition to it."[54] It is in human societies that humanity develops – the self is affirmed in affirming the other in human relationships.

Opposites (like mythos and logos) cannot be brought together except by an act of the self whereby the self raises itself above opposition, creating a new mode of tension.[55] Such creative acts are typically sympathetic strains that link differences together into a 'synoptic vision'. Neither must be discarded. The clarity, precision, and power of science must be allied with the depth of sympathetic feeling of the humanities to balance justice with mercy and, thus, perfect the human being.

---

[53]Cassirer, *Language and Myth*, 62.

[54]Garzilli, *Circles without Center*, 46.

[55]For Levi-Strauss, opposition remains: the myth remains a myth as long as it is felt as such, i.e., it includes all its versions whether primitive or modern.

Journal of Dharma 34, 2 (April-June 2009), 185-206

CAUSAL HORIZONAL RESEARCH IN COSMOLOGY

Raphael Neelamkavil♦

1. Microcosmic and Macrocosmic Causality and Acausality

This essay treats a borderline issue among Philosophy of the Cosmos, Astrophysical Cosmology, and Quantum Mechanics. The present universe (if there is only this one, finite, big bang universe) and/or the whole multiverse (if there are other universes beyond our big bang universe) would have to be fully and thoroughly causal.[1] But there exist lacunae on the way to causality: both in the contemporary philosophical understanding of causality and in the theoretical recesses of micro- and macro-cosmic theories. Taking cue from my earlier work on microcosmic causality, I work here from the hypothesis that the microcosm is probably causal in all its infinitesimal parts.[2] The micro-world is thoroughly causal,

---

♦**Raphael Neelamkavil**, interested in "Unification Theories" in Western and Eastern Metaphysics and in Cosmology, holds a Licentiate in Philosophy from Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, and is currently pursuing his doctoral research in philosophy of science at Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune. He has authored *Physics without Metaphysics?* (Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2006) and his articles have appeared in national and international journals.

[1]By 'thoroughly causal' I mean causally extending to all the infinitesimal aspects of the microworld and all the large scale aspects of the macroworld. Since the universe is constructed of what it is in its microworld, which combines to form the macroworld, the microworld processes and the macroworld processes supervene on each other. The context of the micro is the totality of causal structures in the macro, and the macro happens by combining the micro, which happens very much within the broader context of the micro-macro antecedents, from within the causalities of which the micro emerges, each time with something new contributed by the causal past of the macro and each time the micro contributing something of its own to the future of the micro and the macro. So, causality does not belong to just one of these two levels. Even if the probabilistic microworld is all causal, emergence of novelty in things would consist in effects from the subtler micro and broader macro levels from without the very particular micro and macro levels that are currently in question. Put differently, there shall be no aspect of the micro and macro levels of the world that is not causal and emergently contributive to many other spacetimes.

[2]See Raphael Neelamkavil, *Physics without Metaphysics? Categories of Second Generation Scientific Ontology*, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2006, especially Chapter 1. There exists a causal-acausal impasse in Quantum Mechanics and Cosmology, against the background of the general zeal of some physicists and

© 2009 *Journal of Dharma: Dharmaram Journal of Religions and Philosophies* (Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bangalore), ISSN: 0253-7222

and, by sequel, the macro-world too is thoroughly causal within itself, whether the world is created or not! There are, however, some theoretical difficulties in our macrocosmic theories. So, we shall discuss the big bang theory as the most accepted macro-cosmic theory to date, point out its major defect in the questionable concept of causation at the singularity, and suggest that it is important to work towards filling the lacuna in order to build a thoroughly causal understanding.

---

non-physicists (1) to intrude Cosmology with the statistical interpretation of quantum effects without recourse to the Law of Causation at the microcosmic level, (2) to unify Quantum Mechanics and Cosmology without the direct use of the Law of Causality, and (3) to label the uncertainty relation and the statistical interpretation of Quantum Mechanics (a) as the intrusion of consciousness – which they tend to take to be acausal and so infinitely different from matter, everywhere in the micro-universe, (b) as the substitution of cause with statistical explanation, and (c) as the intrusion of acausality in the physical / material. There is no substituting causation with statistical explanation in Quantum Mechanics, because one could not say that the quanta and the electrons are the ultimate particles, and that if they too are composed (which we know electrons already are) they would not contain inner causal structures and processes! Statistical explanation is only an attempt to summarily state just what we know by experiment, by refusing to rationally admit that all of physics presupposes further inner-quantal causation and, thus, causation everywhere. Sub-quantal, sub-sub-quantal and other more minute causes vouchsafe for the Law of Causation, not merely for causal theories. That is, what we have observed on the photographic plate, by use of an experiment that works at a certain level of minuteness of the subatomic, cannot be a substitute for the very condition for the possibility of each of the hits on the photographic plate! The fathers of Quantum Mechanics have compromised much on this fact. Hence their confusion between the causal and the acausal!

My line of argument on causality in the quantum world is as follows. If we consider the experiment of accelerating an electron in the double slit experiment or any other, by a beam of energy, this very action implies that we cause some effect in the electron, which already presupposes what we call causality in physics. Further, whatever thus perceivable as preceding in a consequential manner may be taken to be causal, in the very least not acausal. Therefore, there is no more reason to say that what is considered to be initiated causally produces something acausal out of nothing. None can show the line of transition from causation to acausation, using any micro-, meso-, or macroscopic theory, because they involve an irrational sort of infinite gulf. The context of this sort of infinity is purely arithmetical infinitesimality of elements, and appropriating a one-to-one correspondence relation between infinitesimals and elements of a whole number progression, as distinguished from infinities that do not depend on infinitesimals for validity. This presupposes the principle of absence of absolute discontinuity between two causally connected things, both of which evolve in the causal process.

I would like to put in gist the basis of our arguments and in the meantime define 'continuity'. Physics is impossible without the existence of physical / material processes. By existence we mean just the dimension of there being something in process; by process we mean anything other than pure staticity (i.e., partial staticity and partial fluency). If anything is in process, it cannot, ontologically, be mutually and infinitely differentiated things. That is, physically, objects are in association, and, whatever that mode of association, it signifies a finite force of attraction, and necessarily also a measure of repulsion. None of these phenomena can be active in an infinite measure in a finite spacetime,[3] or it would be against the very rationality of physically acceptable logic. These are some fundamentally ontological – not merely physical, but physical-ontological – facts about the universe. Their factuality is constant, although we may have any number of expatiations of the same, *ad libitum*. Therefore, they are physical-ontological dimensions of the universe, not finite facts.

Given the *constancy of factuality* of the fundamental ontological assumptions of science (not of their definitions, but of the factual dimensions that they represent), namely, the continuity, causality, etc., of the ontologically assumed actualities, then, inconstancy / discontinuity in the fundamental assumption of causality (not in things) is out of the question. Once again, by constancy, here, is not meant (1) the materially impossible temporal and / or spatial continuity of one thing with the other, (2) the similarly impossible temporal and / or spatial continuity of causation of one thing with another that is perceived to be the only cause, etc. Instead, even if things may be different and discontinuous with others in specific spacetimes, I would argue (1) that this spatiotemporal discontinuity in material bodies (events) does not vouch for an absolute spatiotemporal causal discontinuity anywhere, and (2) that the principle of continuity of 'total' causation of series of things by certain others (although, for it to be total, the description has to bring in the whole causal past) in any sort of event already implies that they are spatiotemporally indispensably causal. This refers to the genuine meaning of causality as the

[3]Spacetime may be defined as the measure of movement between two events. Minkowski formulated this concept for the Special Theory of Relativity, which Einstein extended to the General Theory, against the background of gravity. With respect to movements, spacetime is the real structure of events, which may be stretched, squeezed, rippled, or poked holes into by other spacetime events. *To this extent, spacetime is also the structure of the measure of movements caused by events.*

fact that everything flows causally from whatever in its causal roots has caused it. This more general and universal law is the Law of Causation, and it goes beyond the specific causal theories in specific sciences – which tend to mistake for law the fact of action of what is discovered as cause.[4]

The temporal and spatial world may have finitely spatiotemporal discontinuities. For example, the spatiotemporal distance of parts of the universe from 'singularities' – which should not have been called so, since they infinitize the finite spatiotemporality of the so-called centre of the big bang universe and of black holes – is an instance of spatiotemporal discontinuity. But, no event can have any discontinuous moment or place in which there is no causation in one and the same event, however dissimilar the different spatiotemporal parts of the event be, because there can either be some causal connection or not at all. In the latter case, however, infinite time lapses between the two parts of the event. The causal connection between the former and the latter lies not merely in the two immediately spatiotemporal former and latter parts of the event, but in the larger spatiotemporal context, in which many prior but anonymous spatiotemporal elements connect the former and the latter known events in question. Thus, causation extends beyond the immediate to the very causal horizon.

This continuity of causation, derived and justified from the causal horizon, is a presupposition of the present work. Such causation is not causal continuity in all of space and time, but instead, absence, in every particular part of the universe, of abstract, unconnected acausal moments or spaces. This absence dispenses with the continuity of whatever amount of acausality, available in statistical-physical explanations of the microcosmic- and singularity-bound causal conclusions[5] of quantum

---

[4]We define 'causality' as the state of process of the universe in which every finite element – however close to infinitesimality its spatiotemporal extension is – influences in some way many others in its spatiotemporally non-infinite vicinity: the influence into the future being the effect/s, and influence from the past being the cause/s, both of which change in the process of causal affectivity. Whatever such influence may be, let us call it 'causation'. The Law of Causation is the most general statement of possibility of particular causes.

[5]"These models all predict the existence of a singularity at the very beginning, at which the temperature and density are infinite." *The Routledge Critical Dictionary of the New Cosmology*, s.v. "Big Bang," 132. Singularity may be defined as the mathematical (Euclidean?) point of spacetime at which the spacetime curvature is infinite. I have added 'mathematical (Euclidean)' to the simple definition by Yu. See

physics and cosmology. This is not just the conceptual aspect of causality somehow "pertaining to the cosmos of experience," but the very factuality of causality in the cosmos.

2. Causal Horizonal Questions in the Big Bang Theory

The big bang theory[6] is today the backbone of cosmology. Famously, the big bang model deals primarily with intra-cosmic causality, presupposedly

---

Vladimiróv, N. Mitskiévich, and J. Horský, in *Space, Time, Gravitation*, Moscow: Mir Publishers, 1987, 158. Along with the alleged infinite spacetime curvature come also the alleged infinities of density, pressure, etc. I personally believe that the infinite spacetime curvature at the singularity is only ideally attainable, since at that point the geometry tends to be purely Euclidean. Although, in fact, theoretically the singularity is a mathematical point of no extension, cosmologists are prone to identify a physical content therein (due to the physical presupposition that for practical purposes the mathematical point is somehow to be equivalent to the physical point) and, then, call it a mathematical point of no extension at the centre of the big bang as the cosmic singularity or the black hole singularity, since it is a mathematical necessity!

[6]Abbé Georges Édouard Lemaître suggested the big bang model of the universe (1927), specially detailing theoretically its origin in an imaginatively appealing system. Alexandr Friedmann had found the big bang solution to Einstein's General Relativistic equations (1922), but had not worked out the early stages of the universe. By detailed observations of redshift of some galaxies from the Mount Wilson and later Palomar Observatories, Edwin P. Hubble argued (1929) that the universe is expanding with increasing recessional velocities of galaxies that are proportional to their distances from us. This was the first strongly observational support for Lemaître's big bang model. After the Lemaître and Friedmann models of the big bang universe came the Friedmann-Robertson-Walker expansion ("FRW cosmologies") of Einstein's equations. Roger Penrose, *The Road to Reality: A Complete Guide to the Laws of the Universe* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2004), 704. It was the nuclear physicist George Gamow who, by 1965, with the collaboration of Ralph Alpher, Robert Herman and a group of new generation cosmologists, made the big bang theory highly acceptable to physicists, through the work on the early stages of evolution of the universe. Helge Kragh, *Cosmology and Controversy: The Historical Development of Two Theories of the Universe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 81.

Today the big bang theory in altered shapes holds sway as the backbone of the expanding universe theory, and is also couched in General Relativistic equations, which do not take explicit support from the Law of Causality, but only presupposes it, because of its stress on spatiotemporal description of processes. Work is on to develop a quantum cosmology of the expanding universe, with or without the use of strings- and superstrings theories. Three most accepted reasons may be given for the

only to the extent that the universe could be exhausted by the universe of just one big bang, since all else is a conjecture. What about the general causal structure of this big bang universe taken as such, given the possibility of big crunches and further bangs? If the present big bang universe is just one such in an infinite sea of universes, what would be the most general structure of causality in such a universe? Would causality be thorough or partial in all these cases, or only in one or a few of them? This type of questions would presuppose that we deal first with the case of the big bang universe and the thoroughness or otherwise of intra-cosmic causality.

The treatment of intra-cosmic causality of the big bang universe should answer also questions that issue from the above possibility. But, the question, 'To what extent can the outward physical causal influence from the big bang universe of ours go on to other universes of the multiverse?', is answerable only if the extent of influence of intra-cosmic causal effects of the matter-energy within one and the same universe is understood. To have material causality engage infinite time to traverse infinite space and time to influence infinite number of parallel universes in the multiverse is a contradiction in terms. For, there is only finite causal influence at a finite mutual distance. Otherwise, the intra-cosmic causality of one big bang universe would have to depend on an infinite number of external causal strains, which cannot ever be materially infinite, given the spatiotemporal

---

big bang theory: (1) The conclusion of acceleration of galaxies, from the fact of redshifts of galactic radiation that reaches us, shows an expanding universe, and a backward reconstruction from it shows at least one big bang. This is a causal reconstruction. (2) The theory predicts that 25% of the total mass of the universe is helium formed during the first few minutes (or much after the inflation scenario took over) after the big bang, which agrees with experimental facts at least in the known parts of the universe, the explanation of which has expressed things causally. (3) Most important of all, the presence of the remnant cosmic background radiation, predicted earlier by theoreticians and fortuitously discovered by Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson in 1965, reconfirmed by the 1989 Cosmic Background Explorer (COBE) and announced in 1992, shows the big bang as its source. This too has been conceived as a causal residue of the big bang. After about 300, 000 years of expansion, the universe cooled to a temperature of 6, 000 K (somewhat the surface temperature of the sun), at which temperature individual electrons and nuclei formed stable atoms without net electric charge. Electrically neutral atoms would not interact strongly with electromagnetic radiation, and so, the background radiation went undisturbed. John Gribbin, *Companion to the Cosmos* (Hyderabad: Universities Press, 1996), s.v. "Background Radiation," 48.

causal possibilities within a given finite big bang universe. Thus, a material causal influence traversing an infinite time with respect to every bit of an eternally pre-existing finite universe or infinite multiverse becomes redundant. Hence, what is possible is an ever-growing causal horizon.

Thus, I find certain causal conceptual discrepancies in the assumptions about the beginnings of the big bang universe and other theories that absorb the concept of big bang into their theoretical structure, which we shall discuss in this essay. Here I restrict myself to just paving the way for showing that the big bang universe of can only be thoroughly causal. Whatever I think are philosophically difficult to accept from within these existing theories seem to me to bear from certain logical, mathematical and physical assumptions built into the fields of success of application of the big bang theory by their very nature, some of which have gone into the foundations of other theories too.

So, I take up the assumptions and results of the big bang theory, and proceed to argue that certain general causal and acausal conclusions of the big bang group of theories do not follow, and that some other conclusions are only part of other larger ways of solution of the causal / acausal impasse. It is essential to show that the so-called mathematical and physical singularity before any big bang and before any black hole explosion,[7] if they are to be considered acausal, is only a mathematical extrapolation and approximation, and a physical containment of the play of infinities and zero-extension point instances[8] in physical theory.

---

[7]"In order to set the scene, Bardeen, Carter and Hawking had, by the early 1970s, arrived at a number of important results about the nature and properties of black holes. These can be summarized in the four laws of black hole mechanics: (1) A quantity called the surface gravity κ_h is constant over the surface of the black hole. (2) The change in mass due to external actions is given by $dM = (\kappa_h)\ dA / 8\pi G$ + work terms, where A is the area. (3) The area of a black hole always increases. (4) The surface gravity cannot be reduced to zero." Moss, *Quantum Theory, Black Holes and Inflation*, 1-2. The surface of the black hole is the event horizon where escape velocity is the speed of light and, so, deeper from within the black hole, from beyond the event horizon, one expects absolutely no escape, and never more! This, mixed with our suggested solution for the singularity problem in this essay, points to the fact that there is something wrong with the limiting of possible velocity as the speed of light.

[8]An interestingly disparaging remark by David Bohm about the theoretical inconsistencies in Quantum Mechanics could be considered as extendable to

Problematizing of infinities in the black hole singularity and in the big bang singularity is not made up without reason. It is mathematically a need, based on the physical impasse created by the mathematical concept of continuity. It is also a philosophical issue because it tells upon our very understanding of the 'causal horizon' of the universe, and not because of a need to bring out some ontological conclusions out of the dilemmas that involve infinities and zeros in the big bang.[9]

Cosmology, the calculation of the speed of light in the Special Theory of Relativity, etc. Here, Bohm discusses a theoretical aspect of the crisis in quantum mechanics and relates it to the point instance concept: "When one applies the existing quantum theory to the electrodynamics of 'elementary' particles (such as electrons, protons, etc.), internal inconsistencies seem to arise in the theory. These inconsistencies are connected with the prediction of infinite values for various physical properties, such as the mass and the charge of the electron. All these infinities arise from the extrapolation of the current theory to distances that are unlimitedly small. Among the things that make such an extrapolation necessary, one of the most important is the assumption, which seems to be an intrinsic part of current theories that 'elementary' particles, such as electrons, are mathematical points in the sense that they occupy no space at all. On the other hand, in spite of many years of active search on the part of theoretical physicists, no way has yet been found to incorporate consistently into the current quantum theory the assumption that the electron occupies a finite region of space. While it has been suggested that perhaps the infinities come from an inadequate technique of solving the equations (i.e., perturbation theory), persistent efforts to improve this technique have not yet produced any favourable results, and indeed those results that have been obtained favour the conclusion that basically it is not the mathematical technique that is at fault, but rather the theory itself is not logically consistent." David Bohm, *Causality and Chance in Modern Physics*, London: Routledge, 2008, 121-122. In a footnote for this passage, Bohn adds: "Most of the difficulties originate in connection with making such an assumption consistent with the theory of relativity."

[9]For example, Moss says: "In order to qualify as a black hole the surface has to divide spacetime into two regions as it evolves in time. Light from the outer region can escape to infinity but the light from the inner region is trapped. The event horizon between the two regions is generated by a special set of null lines or light rays whose curvature determines the surface gravity κ_h. For a Schwarzschild black hole the surface gravity is $\kappa_h = 1 / (4GM)$." *Quantum Theory, Black Holes and Inflation*, 1-2. If, by the Schwarzschild theory, the light from the outer region of a black hole in a galaxy can, at least mathematically, "escape to infinity," then, the so-called sole big bang universe could physically free into infinity the radiation from within the outskirts of its massive central black hole, just after the central black hole exploded! This poses questions at the foundations of the extent of influence of gravitation in the big bang universe.

The causal horizon of the universe refers to the spatiotemporal horizon of causal events in the universe, (1) which lies ever beyond the immediately given causal processes and (2) within which alone we can bring in a systematic explanation of the difference between (a) the concept of strict mathematical continuity in the infinitesimals that are used to describe the processes in the universe and (b) the concept of the actually spatiotemporally discrete nature (discontinuity) of causally interacting finite bodies within a specific spacetime – without actual recourse to wider causes. The merit of the concept of causal horizon that brings mathematical continuity and spatiotemporally physical discreteness to bear upon particular causation is that causal horizon always leads causal explanations far beyond their immediate present, into theoretically / mathematically including, in the past, all that have contributed to give rise to the phenomenon in question. Hence, the causal horizon of anything is whatever has gone to contribute to its causal formation. What is missing or mistaken in a physical theory can always be supplied if we dig up the causal ramifications of elements possibly involved, all of which are already admitted by the horizon.

Now, the dilemma of continuous relation between infinities and zeros in macro-physics blocks the concept of causal horizon. When, in the graph of the four-dimensional spacetime of a black hole, the process of increase of density is charted against the process of decrease of volume, by a one-to-one correspondence between the set of progression of possible values of density (which increases by rational values of ever greater nominators) and the set of retrogression of possible values of volume (which decreases by rational values of ever smaller nominators), then we end up with the possibility of infinite density as against zero volume. It is most interesting to note that in singularity, there is an infinite gulf, where only absolute discontinuity from the previous and the later physical states and, thus, absolute acausality apply boundlessly. It is not merely a mathematical inevitability in the case of cosmology. It is a causal-theoretical abyss into which most astrophysical cosmologists have fallen, escape from which is feasible neither by physical solutions nor by mathematical solutions, but by fixing the limits of applicability of mathematics to physics by use of the Law of Causality, with clarity in the concept of causal continuity.

Thus, one wonders what is missing in the physical theory when, say, in the case of the volume-mass ratio in the singularity, ever smaller

infinitesimals are permitted to be on a one-to-one correspondence with ever growing finite values, in asymptotic approach, causing the following physico-mathematical dilemma: "Has the black hole a size? In one way, yes; in another way, no. There is nothing to look at."[10] Further, (1) as in such a classical prediction adhering to the mathematical dictate of asymptotic approach, only infinite density could be achieved in a finite time of implosion, and (2) as expansion after a collapse into such infinite density is impossible in the classical Einsteinian theory and in the geometry, the physicist looks for missing effects or quantities, but "[n]o one knows a cheap way out. The infinity is infinity so long as one stays within the context of classical theory. Infinity is a signal that an important physical effect has been left out of account."[11] If the massive black hole at the centre of the universe and elsewhere had to have infinite density, with an infinite curvature of space, it was suggested by Khalatnikov and Lifshitz, during the 1965 London International Conference on Gravitation Physics, that "perfect symmetry" of the sphere of the black hole was a must. But,

> Penrose, Hawking, and Misner ... gave compelling arguments why minor departures from sphericity will not save the system from being driven to a singular state. Subsequent to the conference, Hawking, Penrose, and Geroch, working within the framework of Einstein's theory, giving up spherical symmetry and accepting one or another set of simple conditions on how the motion starts, have proved that a singular condition inevitably develops. Zel'dovich has arrived at the same conclusion in another way.[12]

Clearly, perfectly spherical symmetry in cosmological processes is *non grata*, and any geometry that follows or ends in perfectly spherical horizons even at the most extreme ends of a process is unfit for physical application. One believes merely in the mathematical formalism over limits of physical possibility and applicability!

One may now say that the solution hides in Quantum Gravity in that, if the quantum of action were applied at the "moment" of creation, at the

---

[10]John A Wheeler, *At Home in the Universe*, New York: Springer Verlag, 1996, 59.

[11]Wheeler, *At Home in the Universe*, 56. In fact, the infinity here is no signal of having left an important effect out of consideration, but the signal that, due to lack of limits to application of mathematical infinities and zeros to physics, a physical infinity and a physical zero result!

[12]Wheeler, *At Home in the Universe*, 57.

singularity of black holes and at the singularity of the centre of the universe, then everything will be all right! Unless it all serves to de-sphericise the shape of the event horizon[13] – which Quantum Gravity cannot do, due to lack of tools and since it works within the framework of the concept of speed barrier of light that permits the Schwarzschild radius to forbid forever any escape of anything from the surface of the black hole – one cannot imagine a solution. Still another solution I would visualize is that of showing that the spin of the central black hole of the universe that is supposed to be in singularity is not infinite after all! Only infinite spin could hold infinite mass together, and only infinite spin would make the centre absolutely spherical. This shows that something physical is missing or mistaken in the fundamental theory, due to lack of delimitation of mathematics to physical consumption.[14]

3. Spatiotemporality of Macrocosmic Causality in the Singularity

Without prejudice in favour of what may emerge from our work as a theory more general than the present limited big bang theory, let us accept the essentially general sense of the details of the big bang theory as such, as developed by the pioneers and by later astrophysicists and cosmologists. Before we point out the problems in the theory of singularity, we put down some commonplace details of the big bang theory and move forward with the vantage thus obtained. This will prepare us to accept the causal horizon as the foundation to draw some causal horizonal instances that may later point to the fragility of any absolute commitment to some of the

[13]An event horizon is "the imaginary surface surrounding a black hole on which escape velocity is equal to the speed of light. Within the event horizon, the escape velocity would be greater than the speed of light. Because nothing can travel faster than light, nothing (not even light) from within the event horizon can cross this surface and escape into the outside Universe... But there is nothing to prevent matter or radiation from the outside Universe crossing the horizon on its way into the black hole; it is not a physical barrier like a wall." John Gribbin, *Companion to the Cosmos*, s.v. "Event Horizon," 168-9.

[14]I believe that the more fundamental solution that might result in de-sphericizing the primeval fireball and showing that the spin is finite lies in lifting the speed barrier set in the speed of light and in fixing the extent of applicability of mathematics to physics – of which we concern ourselves only with the latter. These do seem capable of de-sphericizing the event horizon of the black hole at the centre of the big bang universe, because they work things out from the very Law of Causality. Questioning the extent of applicability of mathematics to physics here perhaps suffices for getting a working solution.

particularist causal assumptions, details, and conclusions of the big bang theory.

Due to the fact that Riemannian geometry and any four-dimensional geometry will need a frame of reference with its origin as zero in space and time in order to deal with the universe, and due to the "numerics" of singularity applied to the primeval universe at the zero time considered as arithmetically necessary for any mathematical explication of the universe, we are compelled to say that, before explosion, the then-size, -time, and -radius of the primeval universe had to be zero; and, by inverse proportionalities, that its curvature, temperature, and density had to be infinite.[15]

But it is straightforward that infinite time should already have elapsed between this infinite-density state and the actual big bang. This fact produces a contradiction in the singularity requirement! Let me explain this claim further: The singularity is mathematically the ideal Euclidean point at which there are no more dimensions, like at the origin in the three-dimensional and four-dimensional plains. This point is, in fact, only a convention with respect to the spatiotemporal circumstance, since we cannot start the measurements at the three or four coordinates from infinity. The conventional point is physically non-actual, although mathematically it is a convention. Conventions need not as such represent but only symbolize some aspects of reality.

So, to bring this conventional point of the beginning of the universe into actuality by a bang of infinite dimensions, either infinite space and time has to elapse (since this point had to contain all that the universe had), or the primeval ball ebbed in acausally from nowhere, or an Unmoved Mover God created it just once, once for all! This situation is brought in by the arbitrary choice of the origin of the mathematical description. This physical paradox of application of mathematics having been spelt out at the very outset, it is important for us now to go into some more essentially general cosmological details of the big bang theory, to be able to argue further in favour of the thoroughly causal horizon of the big bang universe. This would tell us that infinite density at the central black hole of the universe is a contradiction.

Our disjunction is: Will the big bang universe go on expanding forever into the distant future? Or will it stop expansion, allowing implosion of the whole matter into the central black hole and, thus,

[15]Pagels, *Perfect Symmetry*, 250.

continuing to a finite or infinite number of oscillations?[16] But will there be an end at all for the expansion of the big bang universe as a result of the mathematically presupposed infinite density and zero spacetime in the singularity? For this, we need an answer that settles the causal horizon of the big bang singularity. So our concentration is on the big bang singularity.[17]

For pragmatic purposes, propagations (gravitational and also electromagnetic or other forms of non-gravitational propagations that are produced) at the big bang moments may be assumed to take an almost Euclidean, close to flat spherical geometry of straight line propagations from the outskirts of the universe, determinable at any given time, measured with respect to its centre, although these are still not conceivable as being beyond the gravitational influence of the centre of the universe in question. But I would argue that, if infinite matter has to be contained in this universe, its spherical geometry could not be absolutely flatly Euclidean, since infinite matter can never be contained in a finite spacetime implying finite volume, though it can be assumed to follow a geometry close to flat spherical geometry. Only infinite matter could have made it irreversibly of infinite spacetime curvature. This, however,

---

[16]Here we do not have to bother about cosmological defect-formation due to sharp phase transitions and symmetry breaking in the overall history of the big bang universe, because what we deal with are much wider phenomena – very much external to the inner happenings of matter content in the universe – all of which are aimed only at a general causal inquiry for which we do not use direct causal results from the formation of surfaces, lines or points resulting from cosmological defect-formation. Famously, these phase-transitional defect-formations are domain walls, strings, and monopoles. Whatever the causally cosmological results we need for our general causal inquiry of the way the phase transitions affect the overall picture, these results are already causally included in what we understand as gravitational, electromagnetic, and other propagations at the outskirts of the (total/island) universe. Our question is more general.

[17]Similarly, General Relativity too may have something to do with our inquiry, but only very marginally, in that the physical state at the very external outskirts of the universe we are planning to discuss is already very much theoretically aloof from the influence of the very consequential conclusions of General Relativity. To put in gist my argument against including the causes of structural defects and effects of General Relativity in our general causal inquiry, it suffices to say that these are not essential since what we finally consider are only (1) the extra-big-bang causal structure derivable from intra-cosmic causation and (2) the widest energy propagations beyond the matter-concentrations of the overall universe.

requires infinite spacetime at the centre of the universe. That is, an infinitely dense finite centre is a contradiction. Hence, the macrocosmic causality within any finite universe will be also finite and spatiotemporal.

4. Causal Thoroughness from the Big Bang Causal Horizon

Now, one might argue that even mathematics breaks down at singularities where the mathematical size of the universe is zero and that, therefore, admitting the temperature and density of matter as infinite at singularities is unavoidable. This is admittedly begging the question or, better, an Anselmian "ontological argument" for the existence of a supposed concept of a mathematical perfection. This perfection is constituted by (1) the conceptually (mathematically) induced and trans-infinitesimal jump of matter into zero spacetime and physical existence therein, which was only assumed, for convenience, to be the geometrical origin of spatiotemporal magnitudes within the implosion process of a finitely spatiotemporal big bang universe and (2) the resultant conceptually (mathematically) infinite density, pressure, etc., that are mathematico-ontologically concluded to be existent in physical / material actuality.[18]

---

[18]To draw parallels between the Ontological Argument and the mathematical argument for the existence of singularity, here is a recent rendering of the ontological argument, by Yujin Nagasawa: "[I]t is indeed *im*possible for atheists to think of a nature that is greater than a-nature-than-which-no-greater-can-be-thought. Therefore, the argument goes through and successfully yields the conclusion that a-nature-than-which-no-greater-can-be-thought must be instantiated in reality." Yujin Nagasawa, "Millican on the Ontological Argument," *Mind*, 116 (October 2007), 1036. Peter Millican, in his reply, quotes these statements and shows why the second statement does not follow: "Nagasawa, on Anselm's behalf, rejects the principle of superiority of existence and suggests instead that the nature <God>, even if uninstantiated, should be taken to be greater than any other nature, achieving a level of greatness that could be exceeded only if it were itself instantiated. Thus the highest possible level of greatness is that of an *instantiated* <God>, and the next highest is that of an *uninstantiated* <God>." For this reason, "... his 'Therefore' here is a *non sequitur*. True, the Fool can no longer escape contradiction in the way that my previous article highlighted: that is, by taking advantage of PSE [principle of superiority of existence] which allows <God> to be – without contradiction – exceeded in *actual* greatness." Peter Millican, "Ontological Arguments and the Superiority of Existence," *Mind*, 116 (October 2007), 1050. In this regard, it is impossible to first show that the singularity that is had in mathematics (representing mind) is already instantiated (representing physics). Without that one cannot say that, since the idea in mathematics is that of a perfection, it has to be instantiated!

It is due to the conceptually mathematical generalization of the concept of number that the consequent infinitesimal process is made to occur in the big bang black hole. Thus, one unwarrantedly takes for granted the conceptually (mathematically) resultant name 'singularity' given to the hypothetical zero spacetime and the conceptually (mathematically) resultant infinite density, pressure, etc., together, as representative of an actual physical / material infinity of mass at zero spacetime / volume, merely because of a certain a-physical (because the process of making values concomitantly approach zero and infinity is not physically instantiated, but only conceptually generalized and dubbed / named as 'zero' and 'infinity') but mathematically proportional (due to division by zero or division of zero) necessity; one would argue that, since it is singularity, it should also possess the very geometrically hypothetical zero spacetime and the rationally impossible infinite mass and density! Then, the cosmological conclusion of this mathematical experience in physics is that we would have to look for further causal structures emerging out of the very finite big bang universe considered, for us to be able to look into the possibility of there ever being an infinite universe!

We have discussed the mathematical-cosmological paradox in singularity. It commits a species of the ontological "fallacy of whole and part" in the field of applicability of mathematics to physics. Let me call this species "the fallacy of identification of reason and mathematics" and try to spell out the ontological problem in it. Reason is the whole and mathematics a part. Here, reason includes other actual forms of logic in addition to mathematics and, further, also includes a sort of systemic logic that goes out from every elementary point of information spirally ever wider to other wider logics that include many such spirals only to form other meta-logical strains acceptable to reason. The method of reason is logic, to which belongs mathematical reason.

The fallacy arises from the fact that, unconsciously, the fundamental algebraic and geometrical entities (which are transcendental entities with foundation in actuality) are made to formally reflect as equivalent to each other and one begins to get such mathematical objects materially identified with physical objects (which are transcendent entities in that they are transcendent to anything different from themselves), instead of mutually imperfectly echoing the body of mathematical theories and the body of physical theories through the interplay of each type as much as possible within themselves by use of the two types of absolutely dissimilar but

theoretically compatible objects. Thus, the source of the fallacy is that the function of mathematics as economizing thought is substituted by reflecting thought as such, here scientific thought. Thus, reason is substituted by mathematics.

To do away with this fallacy, we need a thoroughly causal manner of procedure (beyond the fields of description adopted in the Relativity Theories) in spatiotemporal description in cosmology so that causal necessity (all other forms of necessity have to correspond with this form), yielded by the immediate and more general causal horizons of the phenomena, takes over and mathematically revamps not only the singularities that arise in mathematical description of the big bang universe/s but also the semblances of mathematical singularities of centres of every celestial body. I would like to moot this possibility as a great promise in cosmology, in general, and the physical sciences, in particular.

Let me elaborate on the area in which we need a shift of attitude in the way of application of mathematics to general cosmological processes, in order to avoid the ontological fallacy of whole and part, just mentioned, in the application of mathematics to cosmology / physics. The problem in black hole singularities and in the singularity of the pre-primeval big bang universe is that a finite time lapse is mathematically projected by way of obtaining the then-density as the inverse of infinitesimalized space (and time) at the singularity phase. The mathematical tendency to find the exact inverse of the infinitesimal space would be to do away with causally infinitesimalizing the processes in matter-energy in space and time at the geometrical origin of the big bang and irrationally finding its limit as zero, rather than 'revamping' at every turn from big bang to big crunch and vice versa. Revamping of black hole mathematics from the so-called mathematical singularity of the big bang by way of causal horizonal introduction of the counter-process to the big crunch stage is reasonable, if it is based on the finiteness of the total horizon within the reach of that universe-centre or minor black hole.

This is possible only if everything happening within the actually finite-density big bang universe is seen to be causally reversible due to the impossibility of an infinite causal continuance of the implosion process in a physical universe. The impossibility of infinite causal continuance of implosion has its reason not merely (directly) in the physical nature of the universe, but in the finite mass of the big bang universe and the finite amount / extent of possible gravitational propagation. Finite mass does not initiate an infinite process of compression. This is so because, if every

physically almost infinitesimal element were to permit further compression unto zero volume, an infinite time had to elapse, and this would mean that absolutely no repulsive causal resistance is offered by these particles to other particles getting closer to it. If it had to be so, there is no reason why we find today such causal repulsive resistance! The key to the solution rests perhaps in offering a maximal repulsion ratio with respect to every stage of every big bang.

That is, every infinitesimal-point-instance that seems to mathematically represent particles in the universe has to be originally considered as absolutely two-way causal, as a finite mass of matter does not causally initiate an infinite process of condensation / implosion. Hence, a physical reversion of the gravitational process is really possible, without which an external cause will have to be drawn in, in order to keep the mathematically infinite process of implosion from going! Matter in the universe, in all its imaginable infinitesimal structures, is thoroughly two-way causal, insofar as no infinite matter-energy can be amassed around a point instance in a finite spacetime. Again, doing away with infinitesimalizing causal condensation and causally avoiding its zero-limit have to do with a process of inculcating and maintaining positive space and time into the process. This is causal in every bit of the process, since every bit that is involved resists and attracts other bits, and this is already a two-way causation. So, pure spatiotemporal relativistic description needs only to either introduce the repulsion factor or initiate it at the very inception in terms of an attraction-repulsion factor.

The moment we take the big bang as the geometrical origin (zero) of the four-dimensional process and the physical event horizon, we are again stuck with attempts to avoid bringing in positive space and time at the origin, thus, having conventional mathematical assumptions determining and infinitizing the finite nature of causation by use of the zero at the geometrical origin of the spacetime and reach the conclusion of infinite content in the finite big bang universe. Infinitization of a finite quantity by use of the mathematically possible zero-limit of volume yields the limit of density, mass, etc., as infinity. One forgets here the fact that the big bang universe presupposes only finite, positive time and space. Negative curvature of spacetime is reversible by the repulsion factor that the causal horizon introduces.

This need not mean *ipso facto* that the universe is just the big bang universe of ours, which let me call 'island universe' in case it is part of an

infinite-expanse multiverse. Any fixed origin geometry in a multiverse is left to follow only the pragmatic way of fixing the island universe as the only universe. This has been the ultimate fate of all applications of mathematics to physics. If there is infinite number of island universes, the spacetime of each finite set of them would overlap, and we need a different geometry than what we use in General Relativity. This is a fresh area of mathematical application in cosmology to be worked afresh. Infinitization of the central black hole goes against this possibility. This is clearly a problem of connection between mathematics and physics. Since this happens due to mathematics' unwarrantedly ubiquitous and fundamentalistically generalized application to the condition for the possibility of all physical beings and to the discourse on them and since the philosophies of physics and mathematics treat of the applicability of mathematics to physics, this infinitization is a philosophical problem of physics and mathematics as well. Since the exact structure of the problem has for its context the time prior to the big bang phase of the universe, it is a problem of philosophical cosmology too.

Let me point out also that the lack of any ideal-absolute applicability of mathematics to physics and cosmology need not have anything to do with the now well-founded fact of the absence of an ideally and absolutely axiomatic well-founded mathematics. This is so because mathematics, although derived from physically rational imaginations of bio-physical beings, need not always have to do with actual physical / material possibilities (e.g., topology treats of the quantitative aspect of specific qualities), and instead it may be many a time also of simple, abstract, and non-realizable possibilities of quantities.

Let us suppose for argument's sake that, as is ideally the case, a certain branch of mathematics, say, number theory, is absolutely well-founded on an absolutely true system of axioms. This would produce just another form of number theory which too has zeros and infinities that do not have an exactly empirically verifiable number of counterparts. If (1) an empirically verifiable zero number of objects / quantities implies, by an inverse proportion, an empirically unverifiable infinite number of objects / quantities and (2) an empirically unverifiable infinity implies an empirically verifiable zero, then too we have the absence of absolutely direct compatibility and reflexivity between mathematical objects and physical objects. So long as this remains a fact without contrary choice even with respect to an ideal mathematical theory which, hypothetically, is axiomatically absolutely well-founded, we are still left with the absence of

any direct grounds for correspondence between mathematical objects and physical objects. So, whether mathematics is axiomatically absolutely well-founded on firm axioms or not, we have no absolute correspondence between mathematical theory and physical theory.

At the side of application of numerical values and mathematical procedures to the case of general cosmic processes, therefore, we shall need an inbuilt technique that does not infinitely go on infinitesimalizing space and time at the level of the physical processes in the big bang. We need this technique to permit the negative side of the number (time) line to constantly extend behind the temporary origin, if need be, until the mathematical reconstruction of the physical process is set on a continuous scale of positive quantities.[19] This would ensure the decisive place of general causal horizons in normalizing the place of mathematical applications in physics and cosmology.

Another way is to introduce the repulsion rate constant, either towards the end of the implosion phase, or at the very start within the ambit of a two-way (attraction-repulsion) rate constant – here too under the guidance of general causal horizons. The general causal horizons are to guide them, as without them the two-way process would be equal, giving rise to a mechanical universe that winds and unwinds.[20]

---

[19]Einstein's equations and his picture of classical spacetime, with non-negative energy densities, maintain the unavoidable possibility of singularity at what we call today the Big Bang origin of the universe and the divergence of tidal forces (Weyl curvature) into infinity. Penrose, *The Road to Reality*, 713. It is evident that it is the mathematically unavoidable zero spacetime and its direct inverse, the density infinity, that are implied herein. This is the reason why cosmologists have not been able to differentiate between (1) the actual physical impossibility of access of information from the central core [for that matter, even from the spacetimes slightly apart from the core] of a black hole and (2) the so-called rational impossibility of access of matter / energy to the core of the black hole! Penrose refers to what amounts to the latter assumption (in fact, a result of the uncensored application of numerical zeros and infinities in cosmology), that is, "the singularities will always be so hidden," which is called 'cosmic censorship'. Penrose, *The Road to Reality*, 714.

[20]Thermodynamic considerations would also form part of this phase of determination and adequation of applicability of mathematics to physics. Now, the mathematical way in which this has to be effected and given shape to by necessary changes in the non-Euclidean geometry, differential geometry, topology, and the related mathematical physics, remains to be cogitated by mathematicians and mathematical physicists, not too much by philosophers of mathematics and physics. Suffice it to say that this is possible only if we realize, by considering the results of

This does not mean that we take the universe as necessarily extending beyond the big bang universe. We have made it rationally possible for the universe to be so if it has been extending beyond, by insisting on finite causality exerted by finite mass within its gravitational reach. It remains to the purely rational aspect of astrophysical cosmology to determine if this is the most probable case by reason of the very internal causal structure of cosmic physical processes – which is what I have tried to show in this paper as causally thorough. In any case, a breakdown of the presuppositional categorial Laws of Physical Ontology or of all known laws of physics or of all mathematics at the 'singularity' is now out of the picture. In short, if we are safe in insisting that the alleged infinite density of the pre-big-bang universe in finite spacetime is impossible within the actual status of the causal horizon, it is also easy to avoid mathematical inconsistencies and free ourselves of problems of a breakdown of physical and mathematical laws. Hence, it is now easy to conclude that there are only physical approaches to mathematical singularity at the black holes of the centre of our universe / island universe and of the galaxies.

A related issue of mathematical physics and philosophical cosmology to be kept in parallelism with the causal horizon problem of the big bang universe is that of the causal horizon of (the causally controlled and regularized shape) of curvature of the arrow of specific time in a few other broader cases of the structure of the universe: (1) in case of a singular universe that goes on banging and crunching eternally in oscillations, and (2) in case of a universe that is infinitely spatiotemporal from the point of view of every possible geometry, even from that of Euclidean geometry, i.e., containing an infinite number of island universes, each of which is in a finite number of oscillations, of which only a finite number can be in mutual causal relationship at once. This would be the subject of another layer of investigations one should undertake. I believe such inquiry would give rise to a General Gravitational Coalescence Cosmology that might do away with the cosmological and mathematical glitches in one stroke, of course, after much causal horizonal research on the possible ways of origin and evolution of the universe.

---

some of the preceding sections, that the geometrical origin of description of each big bang epoch is to be set on a continuously positive number line that, if isolated, has a finite physical / material origin, which but happens within the continuously variegated and ever widening quantities of available temporal extensions of matter.

5. Conclusion: Prospects of Causal-Horizonal Research in Cosmology

As we have so far seen, the bizarre fact about the concept of singularity is that the mathematics of the singularity can work neither for the "moment" of singularity nor any other time that follows or went before. So, as I have attempted to show philosophically, that every iota of activity in the primeval universe had to be thoroughly causally continuous as determined from the respective, more general, causal horizonal possibilities. Now, if this is granted, it is straightforward to conclude that the universe is thoroughly causal during, after, and even before the big bang, and no acausality seeps in from somewhere.

This facilitates concluding, at the realm of extra-cosmic causal structures (at the level of possible more general causal horizons yielded by a multiverse) derivable from intra-cosmic causation, that there are gravitationally relatively less controlled energy propagations beyond the total matter-concentration of the overall big bang universe. This is clearly so because (1) when there is no infinite time elapsing, as we have shown, between the so-called singularity and the actual big bang, we have only a finite time between them and (2) during the finite time there is no infinite gravitational control over the energy dispersed at the outskirts of the primeval universe, prior to, during, and after the big bang, and most probably also on the energy released at the farther outskirts of the finite big bang universe. So, as a result of causal horizontal research, we need to go either for an oscillating finite universe, in which case the whole matter would sooner or later be exteriorized in energy form in a finite number of oscillations, resulting in a dead universe where the question why it could not be yesterday or the day before is unanswerable; or else, we need to go for an infinitely oscillating universe which goes on augmenting its causal horizon. The future prospects of causal horizonal research on the cosmos seem quite promising.

If we consider the oscillating universe with an eye to its gravitational and other forms of causal propagation of energy, we may have to consider other forms of theories of the origin and evolution of the universe, too. A detailed consideration of forms of dissidence against the big bang theory is sure to yield more experience and better ways of formulating the discipline of causal horizon with its direction of causal thoroughness and its philosophical, cosmological and ontological implications. At the build-up of so much of consideration of possible layers of the causal horizon of the universe and/or of the multiverse – it being more reasonable to consider

the universe to be most probably as an infinite multiverse – we have to move in such a way as to come to terms with the general causal structure (whether thorough or otherwise) of the universe, i.e., from the inner causal thoroughness of the universe, and discover something slightly more wonderful than what the big bang theory, oscillating universe theory, etc., have offered. This could be done from the point of vantage gained in the present attempt and then we may show with further reasoning that the big bang universe had to be, in any case, causally thorough.

In short, cosmologists have not much taken up the field of causal horizonal research with respect to various theories of the origin, evolution and end of the universe. In my opinion, such a search, particularly by adherence to the fundamental principles and possibilities of general rational and ontological presuppositions of physics, would yield much that is desirable in astrophysical cosmology and further the prospects of philosophical cosmology. This might even revive philosophical cosmology from philosophical attempts to adumbrate it under the discipline of philosophy of science. I would, thus, propose causal horizonal research as a new viable path for the development of philosophical cosmology firmly based on the experimental and theoretical possibilities of astrophysical cosmology.

Do all these moot the possibility of external causation that shows forth from the particularistic causal mess of intra-cosmic causation in the big bang group of theories? Perhaps, as the only way, there exists the possibility of continuous creation that results from a causal horizonal consideration of the various theories of the universe, given at any instance any sort of theory of origin of the universe. I spoke so far of the physically mandatory inner-universe causality, but suggest in the end that thoroughness in inner-universe causality may show extra-universe causality, because causation cannot but be thorough, without which both the inner- and extra-world causalities would incur the irrationally infinite gulf and, thus, also lack rational continuity. This is not a traditional argument, I agree. There may, however, be cosmologically acceptable ways of showing it. I would call this new possibility as General Gravitational Coalescence Cosmology. We need, then, only show what is meant by freedom within the ambit of causal thoroughness.

Journal of Dharma 34, 2 (April-June 2009), 207-220

HEURISTIC EPISTEMOLOGY TO LIMIT DIVISIVENESS

Malcolm C. C. Armstrong♦

1. Introduction

When contrary truths collide, adherence can *potentially* lead to divisiveness and sometimes violence. If truth is the goal of enquiry, how is truth to be pursued or adhered to without causing conflict or, worse, violence? To address these concerns, a distinct *approach* to epistemology is being proffered in the hope that the process of enquiry, deliberation, assent/dissent, and adherence are practised with *authenticity*. The name given to this new understanding of the role of epistemology is Heuristic Epistemology (HE). This approach comprises of three symbiotic and heuristic modalities, namely, the Triad of Apperception, Appraisal, and Appropriation, undergirded by the understanding that the notion of truth is a type of virtue.

2. Heuristic Epistemology

Traditionally, the concentrated effort of epistemology has been to examine the so-called nature of truth or lack thereof (Deflationism). Heuristic Epistemology contends that this is necessary but insufficient. A balanced approach to the subject of truth is required that equally emphasizes the human and cognitional dimension of the knowing process as opposed to viewing truth (exclusively) as something only acquired methodically or formulaically. It was once asked: "What does it profit thee to know the definition of compunction if thou dost not feel it?" Likewise, what profit does it serve to know the definition of truth or develop an elaborate epistemology if the will is lacking a *desire* to diligently pursue and know it authentically?

Heuristic Epistemology is a radical shift in understanding the role of epistemology by forming an integral relation between epistemology and

---

♦**Dr. Malcolm C. C. Armstrong** holds a PhD in Philosophy. His doctoral research sought to understand the origins of conflict which lead him to develop a distinct approach to epistemology called Heuristic Epistemology. Malcolm is the founder of a global initiative called the *Zeitgeist Project* which seeks to bring about a critical mass of influencers to effect change by addressing the *causes* of problems. It hopes to generate foresight by understanding the effects of the *Zeitgeist* so that we do not live with regret.

© 2009 *Journal of Dharma: Dharmaram Journal of Religions and Philosophies* (Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bangalore), ISSN: 0253-7222

moral philosophy (the intellect and will, respectively). It is argued that epistemology cannot be effective in achieving its intended purposes without considering moral philosophy. In addition, HE seeks to bring to light the contributing causes of divergence and divisiveness over opposing truth claims which, in turn, hinder the knowing process of moving from error or ignorance to truth appropriated. The goal is to create an appetence for the pursuit of truth as a type of virtue. More specifically, the intent is to change the dynamics of dialogue and enquiry by instilling a desire for appropriation and thereby limit divisiveness. This is accomplished through a process of sublimations and a dispositive paradigm shift in how the subject of truth is *approached* (i.e., via the proposed Triad and appropriating the virtue of truth).

Given the yearning to make life intelligible and full of meaning, it is not surprising that divergence and divisiveness exist with respect to related truth claims (particularly existential truths). Given the need to find a *will to live*, such beliefs are cosseted when found. People will even criticize those who do not share their *raison d'être* or whatever s/he defines to be the *summum bonum*. Also, given the existential discord that exists in each person (granted in various degrees), the exigencies of HE are best expressed by Seneca who maintains that the "Eyes will not see when the heart wished them to be blind – *desire* conceals truth as darkness does the earth."[1]

It is argued that the two heuristic devices of HE (viz., the virtue of truth and the Triad) can be efficacious in reducing conflict and assist the epistemic process of moving from error/ignorance to the appropriation of particular truths. The Triad is an epistemic shift in *emphasis* from *ratiocination* to Apperception, from objective *criteria* to Appraisal, and from *certainty* to Appropriation. Various heuristic modalities that comprise HE are expounded below:

1. Apperception seeks to sublimate those factors that contribute to divergence and divisiveness, which consequently frustrate the purposes of epistemology and cause conflict. It is the linchpin in the attempt to integrate moral philosophy and epistemology. Apperception seeks to complement the ratiocinative approach of examining truth claims, although it also recognizes the limitations of ratiocination. Apperception cultivates a certain disposition throughout the knowing

[1]Cited in Lynette Evans, *Wisdom for Life*, New York: Book Blocks, 2003, 34; emphasis added.

process which serves to complement the other members of the Triad. In short, apperception serves to calibrate the will and intellect towards authenticity.

2. Appraisal's function is to divert the object of enquiry *to* the subject. Truth is not something that can always be 'computed' by applying various types of criteria. By being attentive to the cognitional process, deliberation will operate more authentically and thereby encourage appropriation. Appraisal approaches truth in a Gestalt and holistic manner and thereby changes the process of deliberation from being mechanical to being dynamic. Another role of appraisal is assessing one's level of apperception and appropriation in order to ensure that the other two modalities do not become static.
3. Appropriation is an authentic process of moving from knowledge to knowing and creates a type of awareness that separates one's beliefs from his or her identity. HE contends that the quest for truth does not end once certainty is attained. Just because someone possesses certitude does not mean, necessarily, that s/he is in a position to say "I possess the truth" about something or say, for example, "My religion is true."[2] Rather, it is the person who *appropriates* a particular truth with authenticity who can say "I *know*." Appropriation is also a response to the *limitations* (as opposed to the repudiation) of the Correspondence Theory (CT). CT and the idea of epistemic criteria or the notion of warrant do not constitute sufficient benchmarks in being able to say "I know."[3] Just as neither the accumulation of knowledge does constitute wisdom, truth can also not be a mere product of adding up, as it were, correspondence criteria. Beliefs are in need of appropriation.
4. The premise of HE is that the subject of truth is far more nuanced than what is commonly cited in the literature of epistemology. To know truly is first and foremost a moral quest. Sometimes truth requires more of the knower than discursive reasoning. The idea of integrating moral philosophy and epistemology begins with the following working assumption of Aristotle's principle: "As are a man's dispositions, so are

---

[2]Nor can truth claims be so easily disregarded without appropriation or via the other two members of the Triad.

[3]Heuristic Epistemology is more of a challenge to the *limitations* of CT, as a succinct and holistic understanding of truth, than an outright dismissal of the spirit of CT (viz., objectivity).

his judgments."[4] Not only moral judgments but also those judgments that pertain to issues of truth.

3. The Desire for Truth

The desire to know truly often manifests itself as a desire for *certainty* with an entrenched *need to be right*. Despite the fact that truth is valued, it is often pursued as a means to an end. That is to say, enquiry or adherence is not always *authentic* but rather a means to substantiate other beliefs or, as Nietzsche argues, for example, the desire for truth is often a cloaked manifestation of the "will to power."[5] Consequently, inauthenticity leads to divergence, which can cause divisiveness and, thus, error or ignorance prevails.

Why does divergence exist in all subject matters, whether in ethics, politics, religion, science, history, philosophy, or any other area of enquiry? In seeking to answer this question, it is being put forth for consideration that one means to reduce divisiveness, resolve conflict, and judge correctly by appropriating the proposed heuristic devices of HE (viz., virtue of truth and the Triad). Not only does HE function as a means to limit divisiveness but to abet the process of enquiry with a desire to know veraciously, thus, paving the way to move from error/ignorance to truth.[6]

Unless truth is considered a type of *virtue*, the proposed Triad will be futile. What is being offered here is not properly an epistemology or a method *per se* but rather an *approach* to epistemology. It is believed that in the order of enquiry, *developing an approach takes precedence*. Traditionally, epistemology does not provide the navigational tools, as it

---

[4]Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. W. D. Ross, in Robert Maynard Hutchins, ed., *Great Books of the Western World*, vol. 9, Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952, 1114[a]32.

[5]Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, New York: Vintage Books, 1974, §4.

[6]The use of the word 'veracious' conveys what the English word 'truth' is not able to, but which the Sanskrit word for truth (*satya*) does: the idea of being genuine, virtuous, and real. *Satya* is from *sat*, which is the present participle ("being, existing, occurring") of the Sanskrit *as-*, "to be, to happen." In short, being true, genuine, virtuous, and real is denotative of the word *satya*. Although the English word 'truth' does not share the connotations of *satya*, its etymology does convey a similar idea. In Old Frisian, for instance, *tr̥uwe*, connotes "trust and allegiance." It is interesting to note that the Hebrew word for truth (*emeth*) denotes being faithful (i.e., faithful to what is).

were, to ensure *authenticity* or instil a desire for appropriation. Epistemology has rather caged the subject of truth within the narrow walls of ratiocination. Given the reality of divisiveness and violence, what we need is a more robust understanding *and* approach to truth than *merely* arid theories of truth, like the CT, which may contribute to the problem of divergence by fostering a superficial view of truth.

Since HE is an *approach* to epistemology, it is independent of any worldview, *a priori* category, or concept. It acts, rather, as a handmaiden *for* epistemology or for any type of enquiry. By attempting to cultivate an epistemic 'ethos' (via the virtue of truth and the Triad), HE functions as an aid in the quest to know by instilling a desire for authentic appropriation, which, in turn, can allay divisiveness and conflict.

If philosophy still means "love of wisdom," perhaps philosophy should not limit itself to Postmodern concerns or exclusively concentrate on the so-called theories of truth and justification; instead it must return to its first love of honouring philosophy's commitment to seek wisdom. If, as the Spanish philosopher Miguel Unamuno states, the "appetite of knowledge is exhibited to us as bound up with the necessity of living and of procuring the wherewithal to maintain life,"[7] and people "believe themselves to be seeking truth for its own sake, [but instead are] ... seeking *life in truth*," then perhaps we need to remember that the "personal and affective starting point of all philosophy and all religion is the tragic sense of life."[8] Is this not why philosophy was born?

For Unamuno, a philosopher is one who "philosophizes not with the reason only, but with the will."[9] This is one account as to why it is being proposed that a more *integral* relation needs to be considered between moral philosophy and epistemology. It is being suggested that the classic or common understanding of the role of epistemology will not bring us any closer in 'attaining' wisdom because too much emphasis is placed on the intellect's ability without due consideration of the role of the will. It is the will that has the 'final word' or as Aquinas puts it, the "will wills the

---

[7]Miguel de Unamuno, *The Tragic Sense of Life*, trans. J. E. Crawford Flitch, New York: Dover Publications, 1954, 22.

[8]Unamuno, *The Tragic Sense of Life*, 37; emphasis added.

[9]Unamuno, *The Tragic Sense of Life*, 28.

intellect to understand."[10] The will also plays a significant part at the moment of assent or dissent. It is for this reason that epistemology cannot disregard moral philosophy in its quest to know. HE seeks to understand the relationship between the will and the intellect and how this relationship affects epistemology. Consider these additional words from Unamuno:

> In the starting-point of all philosophy, in the real starting-point, the practical, not the theoretical, there is a wherefore. The philosopher philosophizes for something more than for the sake of philosophizing... [A]nd as the philosopher is a man before he is a philosopher, he must need live [*sic*] before he can philosophize, and, in fact, he philosophizes in order to live. And usually he philosophizes either in order to resign himself to life, or to seek some finality in it, or to distract himself and forget his griefs, or for pastime and amusement.[11]

A thinking person is a human being before s/he is a philosopher. We seem to forget this during disputations. We are all born within the confines of a labyrinth. Everyone is attempting to navigate around its walls. Is this not what unites humanity, a desire to unravel mystery and find equanimity? Yet, our interpretation out of the labyrinth creates divergent views in the effort to make sense of our condition and to find a *will to live*. What unites us is sadly what divides us ... the wherefore.

To merely theorize about epistemology without considering the existential dimensions of philosophy is like an architect designing a building without knowing the purpose of the building. Or, consider how everyone could agree as to what the 'correct epistemology' is (if there is such a thing); and yet having the 'correct epistemology' is no guarantee that it will be implemented.

HE works with the assumption that epistemology must not be something which simply appeases the intellect. Appropriation cannot be 'attained' solely by the intellect. In short, it is argued that any particular truth, even though justified, is of no consequence if it is not appropriated.

4. Postulates of Heuristic Epistemology

One function of HE is to find a more robust *approach* to truth by placing greater emphasis on the knower and not just the object of truth (of

---

[10]Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, in Robert Maynard Hutchins, ed., *Great Books of the Western World*, vol. 19, Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952, I-II, 3, 5.

[11]Unamuno, *The Tragic Sense of Life*, 29.

enquiry). This is because, given the four modes of knowing (enquiry, deliberation, assent/dissent, adherence), the will plays an equally important role as the intellect. Below are the basic postulates of HE:

01. The CT (in its *modern* articulation) is too narrow and limiting. There are different types of truths (viz., existential, aesthetic, ideological, ethical, etc.), which CT cannot account for since these truths do not pertain to 'facts' and, therefore, do not directly entail a one-to-one correspondence.[12] HE's challenge of CT is not a complete repudiation of CT nor is there a hidden Postmodern agenda or credence to various forms of Deflationism. Instead, CT requires semantic fine-tuning, especially because it leads to confusion (hence the modern movement of Deflationism).
02. The word correspondence has been inappropriately extracted from its original Aristotelian context causing equivocation.
03. The meaning of the word 'relation' in the CT formula[13] is not clearly explicated. Further clarification is required since the traditional meaning of the word was reversed by Immanuel Kant. For this reason, CT is not a homogeneous theory as most of the literature in epistemology implies.
04. *If* CT is independent of metaphysics, the word 'reality' in the CT formulation is ambiguous.[14]
05. The distinction forced by CT between the nature of truth and criteria is not characteristic of Aristotle who is the so-called originator of CT.[15]
06. The same criticisms that befall logical positivism *may* also apply to the basic formula of CT (i.e., it is self-referentially incoherent).[16]

---

[12]In other words, there are truth claims which do not entail any type of correspondent relation. For example, in what sense does a political *theory* or an economic *theory* correspond with *reality*? If this is a correct analysis, then CT (in its *modern formulation*) cannot account for all truth claims.

[13]"Truth is a correspondent *relation* between the thought and reality."

[14]See Devitt, "The Metaphysics of Truth." He argues, rightly or wrongly, that, "Any semantic doctrine needs to be disentangled from Realism. In particular, the correspondence theory of truth needs to be disentangled: it is in no way constitutive of Realism nor of any similarly metaphysical doctrine." Michael Devitt, "The Metaphysics of Truth," in Steven Hales, ed., *Metaphysics: Contemporary Readings*, Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1999, 94.

[15]The fact that Aristotle is claimed to be the originator of CT is also being challenged.

07. The CT is not clear as to what actually *constitutes* a truth claim.[17]
08. The CT may entail a vicious circle. How, for example, is correspondence or the relation between thought and reality accurately *recognized*, i.e., as true? The obvious question is, 'What is meant by truth?' CT states: "Truth is what corresponds with reality." But, how does one know whether this statement itself 'corresponds'? The answer, given by CT, appears to be: correspondence.[18] Is this not circular?[19]
09. The *quest for truth* is not to be conflated with the *quest for certainty*.
10. Truth is not a noun.
11. Heuristic Epistemology seeks to give an account of the reasons why truth is not always pursued authentically. It is argued that this examination can itself be efficacious as a means of limiting divisiveness or assist the epistemic process of enquiry.
12. Truth is a type of virtue.
13. Enquiry cannot begin until *apperception* is sought.
14. For enquiry to be authentic, for the purpose of 'attaining' truth, it must not merely be pursued as a means to an end. Pursuit of truth is an ongoing dynamic process requiring appropriation.
15. Given the existential dynamics of epistemology, *moral philosophy* and *epistemology* need to be integrated.

---

[16]The refutation of logical positivism's "verifiability principle" was that it was either tautological or not empirically verifiable. In like manner, does CT (which itself is a truth claim) correspond with reality? This potential problem may only be applicable to the *basic formula* given by some correspond theorists. That is, it may be avoided upon further explication.

[17]Consider that a theist could state that an ethical claim is either true or false depending on whether it 'corresponds' with God's moral law, whereas a pantheist or an atheist would not be able to say that a moral pronouncement is true in the same way as a theist could.

[18]In response, a correspondent theorist may contend that this accusation fails to make a distinction between the "nature of truth" and "criteria for truth." However, this does not avoid the problem since any criterion must itself, according to CT, correspond with reality. Pulling oneself up by your epistemic bootstraps is not a solution.

[19]Of course, *if* CT is a first principle (i.e., a necessary truth), then it requires no justification. However, it must be established as a first principle like the "law of contradiction." Aristotle certainly made no such claim.

16. The pursuit of a particular truth does not end with assent or certainty. What is further required is appropriation guided by apperception and appraisal.
17. Enquiry and deliberation constitute a continual process of *appraisal* that requires apperception.
18. The CT (along with most other theories) creates an illegitimate mien towards truth. It limits the knowing process by implying that all that is required of the knower is verification or warrant. This view of truth not only *intellectualizes* truth but hinders *appropriation*.
19. *Appropriation* supersedes the demand for certainty.
20. *Apperception* and *appropriation*, undergirded by the *virtue of truth*, are keys to finding a balance between the intellect and the will.
21. In retaining the spirit of Aristotelian epistemology and given the fact that truth is a property of judgement (via the intellect and the will), HE subjugates assent/dissent to the heuristics properties of the Triad. In doing so, HE claims that truth is in need of appropriation. This does not mean that HE precludes the need for verification and justification but rather to say traditional approaches to epistemology are simply insufficient.
22. By changing how we think about truth and how we dialogue, HE serves three primary purposes: (i) it allays divisiveness, (ii) causes the knower to be hyper cognizant of his/her epistemic processes, and (iii) creates space to move from error/ignorance to the appropriation of truth.

5. Heuristic Epistemology as an Approach

The *process* leading up to assent/dissent is demanding, and without *authenticity* divisiveness seems inevitable. This, in turn, hinders the possibility of a fruitful dialogue between opposing positions and moving from error/ignorance to truth appropriated. As mentioned, applying criteria for truth and having the 'correct' theory of truth or being able to justify one's belief *is* epistemically necessary but insufficient for *knowing* truth. This is one of the main contentions of HE, that is, historically epistemology offers a narrow approach to truth. In fact, this was a similar concern of Nietzsche when he uttered the following:

> SUPPOSING that Truth is a woman – what then? Is there not ground for suspecting that all philosophers, insofar as they have been dogmatists, have failed to understand women – that the terrible

> seriousness and clumsy importunity with which they have usually paid their addresses to Truth, have been unskilled and unseemly methods for winning a woman?
> Certainly she has never allowed herself to be won; and at present every kind of dogma stands with sad and discouraged mien.[20]

No matter what type of truth question is raised, traditionally the answer has been found within the confines of one of two methods (empiricism and/or rationalism). This is problematic for several reasons. Pedantry may offer insight, but does it always yield results! Consider the following from Descartes:

> It were far better never to think of investigating truth at all, than to do so without a method... Moreover, by a method I mean *certain* and simple rules, such that, if a man observe them *accurate, he shall never assume what is false as true*, and will never spend his mental efforts to no purpose, but will *always* gradually increase his knowledge and so arrive at a true understanding of all that does not surpass his powers.[21]

Like Kant, Descartes was in search of certainty and that certainty was the benchmark of truth. Notice how for Descartes the only requirement in attaining "true understanding" is to find a proper *method* and follow it. This approach to truth is flawed because Descartes views truth as something obtained in the same manner one solves a mathematical problem (i.e., using a formula). Some truths cannot be *assented* solely via ratiocination like the statement, "I love you." This truth claim is not on the same level as saying "Your shirt is yellow." The statement, "Your shirt is yellow," is either true or false as is the statement, "I love you." However, the process of coming to the realization of whether these two statements are true or false requires different means. There is no single formula to know all truth claims and even if there were, this would not preclude the necessity of appropriation which is not a product of discursive gyrations.

6. Efficacies of Heuristic Epistemology

Despite recognizing the value of Postmodernism, it nevertheless entails some type of relativism similar to the Sophists. Is it possible to retain a

---

[20]Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. Helen Zimmern, Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2004, 2 (Preface); emphasis in the original.

[21]"Descartes, Rules for Direction of the Mind," cited in Haldaine, ed., *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*, I: 8; emphasis added.

spirit of objectivity and avoid potential power struggles? Heuristic Epistemology argues that relativism is not the only avenue to take in order to avoid divisiveness, power struggles, and violence.

What is the bridge between truth as cognition (i.e., intellectualism, dogmatisms, ideologies, etc.) and (where applicable) its efficaciousness? This is the difference between knowledge and knowing, respectively. A 'spiritual' person, for example, adheres to a set of doctrines, however, s/he also expects some of these doctrines to be affectively efficacious. Some truths require only *intellectual* assent and are not meant to be efficacious in the same way as other truths. The desire to know truly does not end once 'valid' knowledge is acquired or warrant obtained. Nor does it end with assent or dissent. HE contends that given the need for *appropriation*, enquiry does *not* end with assent/dissent or even with certainty.

Certainty does not add closure to truth. Truth, according to HE, is an ongoing process of appropriation – a furtherance of authenticity. The *quest for truth* and the *quest for certainty* are not the same quest despite the fact they are often conflated. This may further explain why many Postmodernists either dismiss the importance of truth entirely or embrace some form of relativism.

Instead of intellectual assent *or* dissent being the end of enquiry, HE states that this is only one facet of the process of knowing. It is being suggested that in order for the knowing process to operate authentically the proposed Triad and, in particular appropriation, must be an essential component in being able to say, for example, "I believe." With an intuitive impetus for appropriation, perhaps, polemic dialogue can be productive or avoided, and even the desire to be right overcome. This change in perspective can eliminate eristic discussions by emphasizing that truth cannot be bantered about simply on the level of the intellect. What is often lacking in dialogue is a healthy exchange of ideas *for the purpose* of furthering one's own appropriation and even appropriating someone else's beliefs (as a means to generate empathy). It is argued that this potential is only actualized once apperception and the virtue of truth is acknowledged and appropriated.

If veracity was measured by one's level of appropriation, instead of empirical or rational criteria being the *sole* proprietor of truth, then one might be less assertive and confrontational. The desire for appropriation, undergirded by the virtue of truth, creates respite and frees one to be attentive. Instead of perceiving those with conflicting views as adversaries,

dialogue is freed from the 'need to be right'. This shift in *emphasis* from persuasion to docility[22] signals a radical shift in the process of personal enquiry and dialogue. With HE, the will and the intellect are conjoined in an attempt to consummate the theoretical understanding of truth (i.e., epistemology) with its praxis (i.e., moral philosophy and appropriation).

7. Conclusion

Consider the following as to why HE is being proffered:

What we think is true is what we *will* value.
What we value is what we *will* live for.
What we live for is what we *will* die for.
What we'd die for is what we will *fight* for.

Herein lies the proverbial door to Pandora's Box, which represents conflict in the name of truth or, to be precise, in the name of "*my* truth" (that which provides one's *raison d'être*).

Something more is required of the seeker and the knower than simply appeasing the intellect and will or attaining certainty.[23] Something is needed to move from knowledge to knowing. It is being proposed that there are certain exigencies (viz., the Triad) that are necessary if epistemology is to be constructive rather than being merely analytical or theoretical. To ensure authenticity the heuristic devices of Apperception, Appraisal, and Appropriation act as concomitant conditions *before*, *during*, and *after* assent/dissent. Cultivating a proper epistemic attitude and appetence towards truth is, according to HE, as equally important as developing a theory of truth.

HE seeks to supplement traditional avenues of speaking about matters of truth, as well as the demand for certainty, toward a more intuitive grasp of truth while retaining the necessity of logic. Consider appropriation. It is analogous to the process of translation. Sometimes

---

[22]To be docile does not mean feeble but rather a willingness to be taught and, when applied to HE, a desire for appropriation. If appropriation becomes the intention of dialogue, then people will *a fortiori* be willing to be docile. Consequently, this proclivity would circumvent the propensity to be defensive or reactionary. The etymology of 'docile' derives from the Latin word *docere*, which means to teach.

[23]HE does not seek to dismiss the possibility of certainty. Rather, it emphasizes that appropriation needs to *supersede* the desire for certainty. This will allow dialogue to be less polemical and thereby allows truth to be more freely explored instead of the need "to be right" dominating the conversation which only hinders the *knowing* process.

analyzing truth claims is like translating an inflected language and, thus, demands more of the knower. It is of little help to use a lexicon to translate a sentence from *Koin* ´Greek (an inflected language) to English without a grasp of Greek grammar. Likewise, acquiring knowledge via the intellect does not (necessarily) enable one to say, "I have the truth." Truth is far more nuanced than finding correspondence as is translating *Koin* ´Greek to English.

What HE seeks to encourage is belief with integrity.[24] Consider the following words of the American political leader Robert Green Ingersoll:

> It is the duty of each and every one to maintain his individuality. "This above all, to thine own-self be true, and it must follow as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man." It is a magnificent thing to be the sole proprietor of yourself. It is a terrible thing to wake up at night and say, "There is nobody in this bed." It is humiliating to know that *your ideas are all borrowed*; that you are *indebted to your memory* for your principles; that *your religion is simply one of your habits*, and that you would have convictions if they were only contagious. It is mortifying to feel that you belong to a mental mob and cry "crucify him," because the others do; that you reap what the great and brave have sown...[25]

Without apperception there can be no integrity; without integrity neither appropriation nor appraisal will be sought. Unfortunately, all too often our *amour-propre* creates conflict and hinders the epistemic process of judging correctly or being able to listen attentively.

To move from opinion to truth is to move from belief to appropriation. Yet, *appropriation* requires *apperception*, which, in turn, requires *appraisal*. Likewise, appraisal needs to be appropriated as does apperception. For appraisal to operate authentically, it requires apperception; hence, the symbiotic nature of the Triad. But the Triad will not be pursued unless truth is *valued* and appreciated as a virtue, a type of duty that enables one to *transcend* differences during conflict(s). In short,

---

[24]It is interesting to note that the etymology of integrity, from the Latin *integritās*, means wholeness. We may claim to be a person of integrity but do we *believe* with integrity? This means moving beyond intellectual or emotional assent towards appropriation through apperception and appraisal.

[25]Robert G. Ingersoll, *The Works of Robert G. Ingersoll*, vol. 1, ed. C. P. Farrell, vol. 1, *Lectures* (New York: Dresden Publishing, 1901), lecture titled "Individuality"; emphasis added.

the degree to which the virtue of truth is imbibed and the degree to which the Triad is appropriated will equal the degree differences can be understood with empathy and thereby avoid divisiveness or worse violence and egregious evil. Instead, dialogue will empathically evolve (with compassion) in such a manner that truth (as a virtue) will act as a precedence, sought passionately yet dispassionately, believed confidently yet humbly, adhered with integrity yet with docility. It is being proffered that through the practice of HE truth is known heuristically. This is the value of appropriation. This is the value of ensuring, in the words of Ingersoll, our "ideas are [not] all borrowed."

Truth is not about being right. Credence to the proposed Triad creates space for authenticity, consequently, divergence is reduced, the causes of divisiveness sublimated, and the road paved for truth to be more readily *known*. It is being suggested that HE could create a radical shift in how we think about truth, how we dialogue, and how conflict is resolved.

Journal of Dharma 34, 2 (April-June 2009), 221-232

ASIAN PHILOSOPHIES FOR THE THIRD MILLENNIUM

Maja Milčinski♦

1. Introduction

If we look at the basic streams of Greek-Judeo-Christian tradition, we see that death is still taken as a challenge that needs to be overcome. Facing impermanence and death in Asia is, however, profoundly different, gentler and less traumatic. An attitude of such maturity is supported by several thousands of years of spiritual tradition, which has developed philosophical views that allow every individual to face his/her eschatological life events. The European approach characterizes life and death as independent states, whereas the Asian line of thought usually presents them as parts of a life-death continuum where one element necessarily and expectedly always follows the other. It is, therefore, important to encourage intercultural communication in religion and philosophy, balancing the theoretical and the practical part. The universal foundations of religions and the philosophy of life and death may be pointed out and questioned. Simultaneously, the critical dimension and re-evaluation of various Ways of searching for "good life" today might be exposed to ensure a more vital role of religion and philosophy in contemporary debates on topics concerning impermanence (the experience of death, the accompanying of the dying, the problem of a high suicide rate, ethical dilemmas such as the right to euthanasia, abortion, etc.). The goal is to learn from Asian traditions and to draw the basic structural foundations for a different, more accepting attitude towards impermanence of a modern individual. The main condition of accomplishing the practical goal is the development of proper conceptual tools and methodology that will be transferable and as such able to contribute to the philosophical field as well as to the development of other areas. Many contemporary American and European palliative care centres already use Asian

♦**Prof. Dr. Maja Milčinski**, the author of *Dictionary of Asian Philosophical Terms* (Slovenia 2003), *Strategies of Liberation* (Ljubljana 2006), *Philosophy and Death* (Croatia 2008), and many other scientific books and articles, has held teaching and research positions at Ljubljana University (Slovenia), Tokyo University, Toronto University, Marburg University (Germany), International Research Centre for Japanese Studies (Kyoto) and Rikkyo University (Tokyo), and Beijing University (Peoples Republic of China).

© 2009 *Journal of Dharma: Dharmaram Journal of Religions and Philosophies* (Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bangalore), ISSN: 0253-7222

philosophical insights and methods in the accompanying of the dying. The historically theoretical dimension of the topic aims to introduce critical thinking to the reflection of the world (as it is today, full of conflicts, disorientation, globalization challenges, etc.) and by doing so contribute to preparing people to face complex life situations and challenges.

The topic elaborates first on the contrastive dimension between Chinese philosopher Mo Zi's universal love – his most important contribution to Chinese philosophy and culture – and what Robert Hartman – philosopher and axiologist, the founder of formal axiological science, the study of values – called intrinsic intelligence or our ability to love and be intuitive. We access this kind of value intelligence through "listening to our hearts." When we are connected to this dimension of value intelligence, we feel a direct connection, with no boundaries or separation of our knowing into parts. We experience this intelligence directly; no objective analysis is required. It cannot even be described using words. Intrinsic values permit us to recognize the individual or situation as a whole, unique, one of a kind. It is the dimension of unconditional loving. How can modern world learn and benefit from Asian philosophical and religious traditions? We are born with value intelligence capacities, which operate throughout all our living contexts: in all cultures, races, ages, genders, and perhaps even in species. From this inner intelligence we develop our inner assumptions about reality. Can this be one of the founding pillars for building a harmonious world today?

2. Universal Love versus Intrinsic Intelligence

The position of the acting subject was a dominant point in the history of European philosophy and should, therefore, be questioned on account of its tendency to domination. One of the main philosophical themes in Mo Zi's philosophy is the concept of universal love which deserves inseparable unity between philosophical insight and meditation. Philosophy is, therefore, not developed only on an intellectual level but also on the physical level, since the truth is not only the way of thinking about the world but rather the way of existing in the world. Discovering the truth is an activity beyond the pure intellect, being a psycho-physical awareness in which all instances of knowledge are simultaneously practical and theoretical.

Problems of diversity, wisdom, and liberation became also the main concerns of philosophical school of Mohism. Confucius stressed the importance of benevolence (*ren*) in relation to ritual and rules of propriety

(*li*). In Confucianism, the self-realisation can be achieved and the wishes should be fulfilled in the specific ethical context. Daoism, famous for its use of paradox, which should bring the adept to a higher level of understanding and experiencing the reality, understood the Truth as *purity and sincerity of the highest degree*. The superior man is able to reach the Dao and one's own liberation through meditation, intuition, and congeniality with the feminine. The notion of reality in Daoism, therefore, brings into consideration new paradigms of understanding life and new sensibilities of the regenerated consciousness, which can be expressed only through paradox as a necessary tool for dealing with diversity, enriching us with it.

Paradox and various other arts of debate became central in various Asian philosophical schools and they could serve as the basis for putting into contrast various Chinese and European ways of approaching truth and achieving freedom through these philosophical methods. The aim is to raise questions decisive for anyone dealing with different cultures in any way. On that way, Mo Zi can show us multiple ways of the construction of a coherent sense of one's own Selfhood through a possible dialogue and point at the necessary limits of the overall love and tolerance.[1] Through transcending the Self for the sake of creative living and an attitude of love to others and to oneself, special emphasis is given on the mind/body continuum which does not leave any room for the devaluation of emotional (bodily) aspects. The topic is particularly important for the possible construction of the multicultural societies and can provide us with some self-knowing methods which might be helpful for practising love, respect, autonomy, and dignity together with various self-empowering methods.

When differences among the ontological categories (being, non-being, etc.) are denied in regard to certainty, new problems as well as original solutions to the old problems arise. Therefore, Mo Zi's demand for a radical negation as the basis for the achievement of certainty, Absolute Truth, is beyond the beginning and the end, Being and non-being, something and nothing. Being and non-being are just two aspects of the inexpressible Truth. Such a methodology and the paradox demand an intuitive structure of understanding which assures meaning in the combination of concepts which would otherwise be understood as logically inconsistent. Metaphorical thinking in the Chinese philosophical tradition is not understood as something inferior to conceptual thinking,

---

[1]Mo Zi, *jian gu*, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1954.

which is itself put into question, especially in the undertakings, such as the path to certainty. The demand for deontologisation has been strong. The notion of voidness, is precisely the one which tests the nature of various attachments (to the Ego, etc.). Therefore, the demand for discovery of the nature of non-attachment, which forms the basis of certainty, is posed. Certainty, acquired in such a way, opens up new perspectives of existence. When the enlightened one, the one who has reached the basis of certainty, sees everything in the light of voidness, protection against the appearance of ontological entities is established, which then opens up this astonishing realm of suchness of Being. Although this means a temptation, the concept of voidness can never be brought to the metaphysical level or reduced to ontology. The voidness, therefore, is not the antithesis to Being, neither is it the position between nothingness and Being. Voidness is transcendence of all standpoints and positions. It provides the certainty which leads to the liberation from thinking, and from substantiating the Self and its imprisonment in the Ego.

Love as a philosophical concept is interesting when treating the problem of certainty. The obsession of having one's life and death under complete control reached in Japan its peak with a genre of descriptions of the people who were certain to have had a good death, i.e., have gone to the Pure Land of Amida to be reborn there. In the imaginative geography, one reaches the model death by passing over the sea of uncertainty, landing in the Pure Land, which is conceptually beyond both hell and heaven. It is an illusion created and transferred beyond one's own death, a dream of a certainty reached in a paradise far away in the West. The moment of death becomes the sole possibility of attainment of the certainty and love sought for during the entire lifetime.

When analyzing the Mohist theories of Heaven, we see that in most of them the transcendental moment is present. The situation, described in the texts as Heaven, is the state of undifferentiated consciousness. Since the language is rooted in the differences, here the void space comes into play. The unusual vision, which might be a product of mystical experience, appears in the spiritual eyes as a vast, limitless space, where things exist in an amorphous, dreamlike mode of existence, always changing and flowing into each other. The Heaven can, therefore, be named as the highest point of uncertainty, where everything flows in a dreamlike insecurity and indetermination. The borders and limits are fluid. It is only the veil of illusion which constitutes the form of language. The primal function of the intellect is that it holds to these mobile and flowing borders, and fixes

them into quiet entities. As a result, clearly defined and rigidly fixed distinctions are formed, although these do not correspond to the paradisiacal absence of the formation of meaning. The veil of illusion forms the totality of being and meaning by which, in our minds, the image of so-called reality is formed. This reality, however, is just a surface reality, just a phenomenon, an appearance, a distorted reality of a real unity of reality, which lies at the deepest level, hidden from the eyes of a common human being. Love and cultivation of knowledge as the means to liberation are instructive, since they do not deny the efficacy of knowledge and can help us advance by several ancillary techniques.[2] Such a standpoint is, therefore, connected with altering the state of consciousness through the use of various physical techniques. It is the state that transcends the *citta-vrtti-nirodha* and is, therefore, indescribable.

3. Beyond the Describable

Such a theory gives rise to a problem of language and the mind-body theory. The absence of Ego, the selflessness and the problem of the inexpressible are the effects of the absolute love and the transition to the level of *citta-vrtti-nirodha*. This is the level of the art of discourse (*pian*), mantra, and of some of the concepts that slip through the clutches of silence and language – the situation which originates and derives from the voidness, as the basis of certainty and *prajñā* or supreme wisdom.

In the moment of loss of philosophical centrality, we face a radical critique of the long lived dream to attain a foundation of knowledge, certainty, and an absolute basis for Truth. The topics discussed above and the methods of Mohist philosophical school call the rational argumentation itself into question. The obsession about whether or not something could be subsumed under the concept of Truth becomes irrelevant. One of the challenges that we face when approaching Mo Zi's text is the problem of language, of the status of words, and of the spheres of silent language and the language of silence in the process of attaining universal love and

---

[2]C. Chapple, "The Unseen Seer and the Field: Consciousness in Saamkhya and Yoga" in *The Problem of Pure Consciousness*, ed. Robert K. C. Forman, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, 62-63. While the author presents the five fluctuations (*vrtti*) of the mind (*citta*) as described in the *Yoga Suutra*, he comes to the conclusion that "for the yogi, the goal is to transcend all five by entering the state of *citta-vrtti-nirodha*. Hence, by definition, the practitioner of meditation is entering into a state of being that cannot be described in the same way one would describe conventional sensory or mental experience."

liberation. Language as the indispensable tool of intellect helps to create the distinctions of everything and the borders among the myriad things, which from the viewpoint of the *citta-vrtti-nirodha* are inseparatebly connected in the One. The word, by contrast, is a symbol, a sign of something that has been in the thoughts. The meaning itself is, on the other hand, the symbol of something which is beyond the grasp of logos and is indescribable, inexpressible, certain, since it manifests itself in everything. Here we deal with two levels: The surface one, in which reality manifests itself in the form of the ten thousand, myriad things; and the other one, beyond it, the certain one, which is spoken of (or kept silent about) in the sense of the first chapter of the *Dao de jing*.[3]

The mind-body concept is based on radical transformation of subjectivity, and with it the notion of rationality and approach to love. The notion of Heaven, as understood and described in the way of transformation of consciousness, demands the opening up of the established governing positions of European metaphysics to deeper dimensions of truth, often related to the trans-rational and trans-linguistic experiences upon which any kind of certainty is grounded. This has implications for the philosopher's interest. Namely, how should one read the autonomous philosophical productions of Asia from the standpoint of the European tradition which has been called philosophia, the *love of wisdom*, a discipline that in its development sought in the name of Truth a "pure" starting point, a foundation of Absolute Truth, the ground of certainty. Such undertakings have been brought close to the reflections of Zhuang Zi:

> The Great Way is not named; Great Discriminations are not spoken; Great Benevolence is not benevolence; Great Modesty is not humble; Great Daring does not attack. If the Way is made clear, it is not the Way. If discriminations are put into words, they do not suffice. If benevolence has a constant object, it cannot be universal. If modesty is fastidious, it cannot be trusted. If daring attacks, it cannot be complete. These five are all round, but they tend toward the square. (All are originally perfect, but may become 'squared', i.e., impaired, by the misuses mentioned.)
>
> Therefore understanding that rests in what it does not understand is the finest. Who can understand discriminations that are not spoken, the Way that is not a way? If he can understand this, he

[3] "As for the Way, the Way that can be spoken of is not the constant Way." Lao Zi, *Dao de jing*.

may be called the Reservoir of Heaven. Pour into it and it is never full, dip from it and it never runs dry, and yet it does not know where the supply comes from. This is called the Precious Light.[4]

4. Challenging Intuitive Approach

The negation of the ontological doctrine is one of the of liberation methods in the vast tradition of Asian philosophies. The way of achieving liberation through universal love in Mohist philosophical tradition, discussed above, can teach us of the illusion of the often supposed superiority of philosophical speculation as understood in the Greek-Judeo-Christian heritage. Such techniques are directed to the development and transformation of the mind and personality aiming at the achievement of wisdom (*prajñā*). Unlike European philosophy, which has sought, in its history, even mathematical models of philosophical thinking, the Asian philosophical schools have not put the demands of mathematical proofs in their philosophy. Instead of a rigid intellectual and logical approach, they have employed direct intuitive experience, which is without doubt richer than rationalisation based on a discipline of analysis and separation. The one-dimensionality of rationality is put into question and can, therefore, not be used as the sole tool for the 'analysis' or 'comparison' of these traditions under investigation with those of the Euro-American stream of thought. The soteriological project of the Asian traditions becomes evident, since knowing, also in its transrational dimension, necessarily interconnects with becoming. This can lead to a certain challenge to the philosophical schools based on the Greek-Judeo-Christian tradition, which have separated the fields of ontology and epistemology,[5] which have been cultivated together, inseparably. The metaphysics of subject and the ontological reductions so well established in modern European and American philosophical history can prove to be unsuitable for the approaches used in Asian philosophies and, therefore, also call for the re-examination of the foundations of rationality.

---

[4]*The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, trans. Burton Watson, New York: Columbia University Press, 1968, 44-45.

[5]Two notable exceptions being Spinoza and Du Marsais, a lesser-known 18th century thinker, for whom, as Miran Bozovic writes, "the sense of probity is as much a constituent part of mechanical constitution of the philosopher as the enlightenment of the mind." It is for this reason that "any action contrary to probity is also contrary to the philosopher's very nature." Miran Bozovic, "The Philosophy of Du Marsais's Le Philosophe," *Filozofski vestnik* 29, 2 (2008), 70.

The questions of reality and universal love encroach upon the realm of the ineffable which remains the source of the great creativity in any philosophical tradition and its way into liberation. To reach this stage, we have to yield our 'given' spirit, and in accordance with this, fasten the spirit, sit and forget, forget ourselves and lose ourselves in love, which is egoless, selfless, without desires, expectations, and ideas about oneself. That is why it is completely free. The unification with the universal love, therefore, means giving up our Ego, Selfhood, which does not mean a kind of self-repression but rather forgetting the Self where nothing is left which could still be subjected to any kind of repression.

In contrast to the Mohist and Christian ways of love, which have often been superficially compared, it is interesting to see how C. G. Jung, the son of a pastor, understood religion. Did it mean to him an integral acceptance of the entire Bible with all its mythological elements, questionable ethical standpoints, and scientific absurdities? What remains of the religion to the true seeker, who gave up affiliation with any Church? Here, Jung's idea of individuation[6] is precious. To him it meant the integration of conscious and subconscious parts of the personality, which is close to the yogic aspiration of *Kaivalya* or liberation in the system of yoga. On the path to *Kaivalya*, the Church – which in its European model accepts the Holy Bible, and condemned as heretics those who could not accept the Holy Bible (except the generally acceptable chapters from the gospels) with all the aberrations from common sense or general wisdom – represents only a refuge for those who could not continue on their way and were panic-stricken when they were supposed to reach the final step in the process of liberation, redemption. For such a path, not only the true seeker but also the society should be mature.

5. Inability of Language Leading to the Open Circle

> Notions of the all-encompassing power of language and word have been ubiquitous in the history and philosophy of religions. So too, has been a recognition of the inability of language and word to give full expression to the realities that constitute and engage human beings and the world in which they live.[7]

---

[6]Michael Palmer, *Freud and Jung on Religion*, London: Routledge, 1997, 142 ff.

[7]F. E. Reynolds, "Foreword: Ineffability" in *The Failure of Words in Philosophy and Religion*, ed. Ben-Ami Sharfstein, New York: SUNY, 1993, ix.

I am aware that with this debate I do not solve the dilemma of universal love and its possibility of application in the world today, but I think that we will have to continue to live with it and keep it alive. Let us say that the prospect of solving questions of love and spirituality lies in combining the logically discursive style of Uroboros with the meditative mystical style, that is, with the open circle, while dwelling on the subject. In this case, we must stop hoping that we will find a redeeming word for the final experience. Instead, we can hope for the indescribable experience, the enlightenment, as a quality of mysticism. If the Uroboros science and philosophy resist such tendencies, we can to some extent understand this as something characteristic for them and a possibility (on both sides) for useful, purifying dialectics. 'Mysticism' in particular may be resisted by well established science and its philosophy, whether it is explained as uncontrolled fantasy or accepted only as a monopoly of the encapsulated and "the only real" Church. If we continue with our vision of approaching authentic spirituality, the prospect of gradual merging of philosophies and religions is revealed. Moreover, the sense for the 'mystical' in literature and art and glimpses of 'mysticism' on various occasions of our everyday life will grow sharper. Shall we still wait for the arrival of *mysterii tremendi et fascinosi*, for something so dramatic as the experience of Apostle Paul during his conversion on the road to Damascus? Such experiences, although much subtler and less noticeable, are not reserved only for people who dedicate themselves to a monastic lifestyle, but in modest forms, they have also been present in the lives of great and solitary souls: philosophers, theologians, poets, and other artists. It is impossible here to start a discussion worthy of attention on the science and method of searching for one's essence in various Asian philosophical schools, such as has been developed through universal love in Mo Zi's philosophy, but this essay intents only a glimpse of its worth and challenge for philosophical and wider social undertakings today.

What challenge can this be for us in the third millennium? In Daoism and various Buddhist streams, there is the obvious absence of any myth of creation; there is, however, a basic premise of reality that all phenomena and things are organically connected. There is no creator (God) who would act from the outside. Instead the creation grows from inside. There is a complete oneness and identity between the creative and the created, an organic, unbroken process of transformation. The principles of ecology, the mutual dependence, and interrelatedness of phenomena are central; it

does not build on analysis, classification, and isolation that divide everything into groups that can then be easily intellectually and technologically manipulated, but rather, in the spirit of cosmic ecology, develops the view of humans, nature, and their relationship. That view of existence that the theory of the 'Indra's net'[8] provides, the worldview that does not build on any idea of initial time, creator or purpose, is very close to Leibniz's theory. In this worldview there is no hierarchy with God the creator at the top and the chain or scale of beings below (from humans, animals, plants and stones at the bottom). There is also no room for the idea of a special position of humans who would own the cosmos for their own intentions in what is called human history, which is basically how history of the universe is understood. This should be seen as a speciestic delirium, not in the medical but in Hume's[9] sense of the word. There is no centre; if there is one, it is everywhere. This worldview presupposes that human beings can develop solely as very fortunate and very rare phenomena of reincarnation, but this does not excuse or condition the argument that the human being is the measure of everything.

6. Conclusion

The narrow part of the coast between land and sea which is constantly subjected to changes of the tides is supposed to be the richest and most diverse in animal or plant life forms. How does humankind encounter and confront its own diversity? In his novel on a Jewish man from Andorra,[10] Max Frisch described a young man who, due to the prejudices against Jews, had been killed by the people of the same village. After the disclosure that he actually was not a Jew, the author asked himself about the notion of true love and concluded that we express the true love to the beloved by not forming any ideas about him/herself. The same is true for

---

[8]It is a view of nature and existence often used in Chinese Hua Yan Buddhism. With its cosmic ecology it contributed a lot to the concept of interdependence and interrelatedness of everything in the Cosmos. The symbol of Indra's net is based on the legend that God Indra ordered to his craftsman to make a net which is infinite and stretched all over the Cosmos. The net is covered with infinite number of diamonds, and each diamond is reflected in all of the other diamonds. It is a limitless process of reflection which symbolizes the interdependence and interrelatedness of each small part in the Cosmos with the entire universe itself. Whatever affects the smallest part of it, affects the entire process as well.

[9]David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978, 269.

[10]Max Frisch, *Tagebuch 1946-49*, Frankfut: Suhrkamp, 1976, 35-37.

the God, to whom in that way we acknowledge that we cannot constrain Her into the narrow mould of our imagination, expectations, and intents.

"Who (*Ka*) is the god to whom we should offer our sacrifice?"[11] remains the crucial question of the Upanishads. This miraculous syllable is like an estuary to a hidden ocean, which produces a lot of uneasiness and closeness at the same time and opens up a vast space to worship: to the nonbelievers as well as to all those who worship differently or to those who think that they do not believe, and even those who might not even be aware of their deep faith, since they have never restricted their deep devotion to the local culture or the narrow timeframe which might be prescribed by a certain socio-political situation or period. For all those and for the ones who have practised absolute love towards God, without any hope for paradise or fear of hell, I ought to pay my respects by sharing with them the wealth of Asian philosophies which I have been lucky to get to know while living in Asia during the last thirty years and which made me critical also about the European cultural and religious myopia.

Can we talk about the fact that we live in times when the pillars of any kind of fundamentalism are shattering? If we take this term in relation to the dogmatic stress of various teachings, we could apply, in its broader sense, the main characteristics of this term to religious or other ideologies. If they, on the basis of dogmas and short-sighted presuppositions, try to expose one level of people as a chosen nation, and together with it put into subordinate position everything that does not adapt to criteria defined by them. Even if any new fundamentalism such as religious conviction, nationalism, adherence to a political party, and the like, is born, it certainly is of a very short-lived kind, shorter even if, inside the group, it is more binding and, to the outside, excluding.

Confucianism and Daoism, the main Chinese philosophical schools, are two paradigms of a principal approach of human beings to the existential, in their essential basic psychological problems, on the one hand, and ontological realizations, on the other. Asian philosophical traditions have clearly formulated this duality. European and American philosophical traditions might be much closer to the Confucian paradigm, Daoist approach being still quite alien to them, and we could more easily find elements of such stands in alternative groups that are now compounded in

---

[11]Roberto Calasso, *Ka: Stories of the Mind and Gods of India*, New York: Vintage, 1998, 17.

the New Age movements, a form of continuation or a new version of the so-called anti-culture of the sixties and seventies. Far from being a form of organization, it is rather a conglomerate of individuals and groups that share a common view of the world and form a specific lifestyle and can be recognized by some common features such as aspiration to a foggily defined "extension of consciousness," tendency to a kind of a new religiosity, resistance to technocratic civilization, endeavour for a healthy, peaceful community which respects life and cares for the ecological purity of this planet, etc.

This general orientation is also based on a certain lifestyle which rejects yearning or longing for material goods, inclines to vegetarianism and simple clothing and which does not tend to uniformity. Large organizations are uncharacteristic of this movement, which cultivates communes, unions, ashrams, libraries for literature, with a corresponding affinity to alternative healing, parapsychology, syncretism or religious ideas, approaching to Hinduism and Buddhism or "Eastern wisdom" in general, but of course rejecting any kind of fundamentalism, also the Christian one. Forming organizations, or even parties, endangers the existence of amorphous, diffuse movements, which are maintained and grow from inner motives. Narcissism of somebody who thinks that in that way – by becoming a part of the crowd – one can get some profit or advantage for oneself, in the sense of "Western values" (even more where there are hidden leaders) can be dangerous. Such tendencies can be a most destructive germ that drives such movements and deforms them in various deviant directions, until they finally drown in the existing social chaos.

Adherents of such orientations and movements are usually young people who abdicate from the consolidated and generally accepted patterns of communication, standard value scales, and ambitions. They are unable to do it any other way. They do not reveal their standpoints in a demonstrable way, and they do not manifest any destructive ambitions toward the existing norms. If they are labelled freak, outsider, queer fellow, and the like, they do not protest. With a slight sadness they accept them, being aware of their own insufficiency, namely, that they do not possess enough mimicry for the others to accept them for themselves. In their solitude, which does not bother them, they are creative – from themselves and for themselves – not in the quantity, but in regard to quality of their creations, that are often a little ahead of the times, so much so, indeed, that they do not live up to the time, when they could experience the acclaim of their work.

Journal of Dharma 34, 2 (April-June 2009), 233-245

HUMANKIND VERSUS OTHERS-IN-LAW

Re-Visioning Levinas for a Postmodern Hierophany

T. J. Abraham♦

1. Introduction

Perhaps, the core of the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas can best be termed as "one's absolute responsibility for the other" where the other unequivocally stands for human beings. Hence, one is unlikely to be wide of the mark, if Levinasian ethics, with some qualification, is designated as 'humanist'. Yet, to be labelled as a 'humanist' in the period during and after the second half of the 20th century is not altogether laudatory. For, the Enlightenment humanist project, generally believed to be an offshoot of the Cartesian Cogito, stands discredited consequent on the rude jolt administered by the anti-essentialist and anti-humanist poststructuralist upsurge. The human centrality was problematized and sidelined in the new philosophies contemporaneous with the Levinasian heyday. Vigorous ecological concerns, upon the heels of these philosophies, have not been comfortable with the exclusionary focus on 'man', due to the growing realization of the interdependence of the human and the nonhuman spheres. Deep ecologists justly accuse the 'environmentalists' as being narcissistically obsessed with the future 'human' welfare, and less with the happiness of all. For, environment is invariably taken to be a human-centred one.

Consequent on the realization of the unviability of an exclusionary humanist approach, there is a pressing need for a vision that determines the ethical status of the nonhuman. The world, it seems, is in want of an ethical vision that valourizes the nonhuman, as the Levinasian approach is rather heavily inclined to the human. This essay hazards a possible re-visioning of the celebrated Levinasian thought for an inclusionary approach to the human and the nonhuman.

The nondualist philosophies, in all likelihood, sprang from the realization of the danger of the growing wedge between the human and the

---

♦**Dr. T. J. Abraham**, Reader in English at St. Thomas College, Pala, Kerala, holds a PhD in English Literature from Calicut University, Kerala. In addition to *A Critical Study of the Novels of Arun Joshi, Raja Rao, and Sudhin N. Ghose* (on Indian Fiction in English), he has published several articles in various refereed journals and is at present the editor-in-charge of the STARS (St. Thomas Academic Research Studies).

© 2009 *Journal of Dharma: Dharmaram Journal of Religions and Philosophies* (Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bangalore), ISSN: 0253-7222

nonhuman in the wake of the transition to agricultural and urbanized economy, from a hunting-gathering mode of life. South Asian religions, both theistic and atheistic persuasions, in their attempts to restore the interdependence, seem to have generally stressed the essential unity of everyone. However, no dispensation that holds out deliverance (*mokṣa*) as the ultimate end can consider the nonhuman at par. A viable philosophy is the one that valourizes the human and the nonhuman for the same reason, and that reason is none other than the continuity of life on earth. Any ethics worth the name should be geared to this end.

2. Poststructuralism and Diehard Humanism

Poststructuralism, in its unqualified version by its celebration of the death or end of a host of entities such as God, author, philosophy, man, and humanism, professes to valourize nothing. Yet, understandably, man and its cognate humanism, either because of their desirability and probably more because of their inevitability, refuse to be silenced. As a matter of fact, the avowed anti-humanist project of poststructuralism ended up largely as a paean to the humanist creed in terms of gender, race, class, and special interests. A humanist ethical turn, if in different forms, is insistent in leading poststructuralist thinkers like Derrida and Foucault. Derrida's later books such as *From Law to Philosophy* (1990), *The Other Heading* (1991), *The Politics of Friendship* (1994), *The Gift of Death* (1995) and Foucault's *History of Sexuality* (1984) and *The Care of the Self* (1984) unequivocally reject any nihilist tones in their philosophy in favour of a humanist ethics. This valourization of the human has found singular philosophical support in Emmanuel Levinas, arguably the greatest moral philosopher in, and whose thought bears down heavily upon, the 20th century ethics.

3. The 'other' in Levinas

When Levinas, in his *Basic Philosophical Writings*, states that "the relationship with the other puts me into question, empties me of myself,"[1] or when Jill Robbins says that Levinas' ethics works essentially by "putting into question of the self by the infinitizing mode of the face of the other,"[2] the terms 'self' and 'other' in the citations are all too definitively

---

[1]Emmanuel Levinas, *Basic Philosophical Writings*, eds. Adrian T. Peperzak, Simon Critchley and Robert Bernasconi, Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1996, 350.

[2]Jill Robbins, *Altered Reading: Levinas and Literature*, Chicago: Chicago UP, 1999, xiii.

and exclusively human. Hence, Levinas' ethics that is predicated on one's infinite responsibility to the other person stresses a human individual's inherent responsibility to the inviolable and irreducible face of the human other.

Levinas, contradictorily though it might seem, is a humanist par excellence by transcending humanism, for, he considers traditional humanism less than human. Traditional humanism "has to be denounced because it is not sufficiently human,"[3] as it has not adequately taken care of the human. Without making a simplistic return to the Enlightenment humanism and by steering clear of the foundationalism of the sovereign subject, Levinas sets out to the restoration of subjectivity that has been refused by the juggernaut of poststructuralist upsurge. In his preface to *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas spells out the aim of his book as "a defence of subjectivity ... as founded in the idea of infinity"[4] and to that extent Levinas may be moving against the currents of poststructuralism as well as traditional humanism in certain significant aspects. As all ethics is predicated on value and some sort of subjectivity, Levinasian subject is defined by its exposure to an irreducible alterity. It is also a fractured subjectivity aware of its "infinite responsibility to the other person" and the impossible demand made on it by the other. Levinas goes on in his preface: "subjectivity realizes these impossible demands: the astonishing fact of containing more than it is possible to contain. This book will present subjectivity as welcoming the other, as hospitality."[5] In this originary relatedness, individual choice is possible but forbidden.

4. The Dynamics of the Levinasian Ethics

In the awareness of its exposure to the other, the self-contained sovereign self disappears. There is a disowning of the ego. In "Meaning and Sense," Levinas says that in such moments of exposure to the other, "the I loses its sovereign self-confidence, its identification in which consciousness returns triumphantly to itself to rest on others. Before the exigency of the other (*Autrui*), the I is expelled from this rest..."[6] Levinas rejects the authority of

---

[3]Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, trans. Alphonso Lingis, Pittsburgh: Duquesne UP, 1998, 128.

[4]Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis, Pittsburgh: Duquesne UP, 1969, 26.

[5]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 27.

[6]Levinas, *Basic Philosophical Writings*, 54.

philosophy that appraises others by imposing meaning through representational structures and by condescendingly attempting to speak for the other because it works by reducing the other and hence employing violence against the other. Therefore, authentic ethics for Levinas precedes ontology and philosophy. The other, in Levinas, is the 'epiphany' of the human face that cannot be refused and which clamours for attention: "this gaze that supplicates and demands, deprived of everything because entitled to everything."[7] Notably, Levinas' ethics refuses to range beyond the human realm.

5. The Nonhuman in Levinas

The nonhuman animal, in the Levinasian oeuvre, receives little attention as allowed to a subject unworthy, as it were, of profounder analysis. Yet, his attitude to the nonhuman animal can be gathered from the essay, "The Name of a Dog, or Natural Rights" and from the interview given to Tamra Wright *et al.* As small organisms, plants and non-sentient kingdom are given still less attention. One gets the feeling that Levinas is unwilling to include animals, let alone plants and inorganic world in the ethical sphere.

"The Name of a Dog" is an anecdote concerning a stray dog named Bobby that became Levinas' friend for a few days during their stint as prisoners of war in Nazi Germany. Bobby's behaviour in recognizing their humanity, a gesture that was hard to come by from their masters, is almost described as ethical: "for him, – it was incontestable – we were men."[8] Yet, the dog is not accorded any ethical status. In his *Collected Philosophical Writings*, Levinas views nonhuman animals much like Descartes did, as live machines: "an animal is a machine not only because it does not know how to utilize its organs in polyvalent way, but because it is imprisoned in its constitution."[9] The singular Levinasian human–nonhuman demarcation is being "capable of living for the other"[10] which the nonhuman is allegedly incapable. Here the same yardstick is applied to the human and the nonhuman, as the human is not so much the Aristotelian–Cartesian 'rational' animal as 'relational' animal. Rationality is downplayed: "reason speaking in the first person is not addressed to the

---

[7]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 75.

[8]Emmanuel Levinas, *Difficult Freedom*, trans. Sean Hand, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1990, 153.

[9]Emmanuel Levinas, *Collected Philosophical Papers*, trans. Alphonso Lingis, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987, 122.

[10]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 149.

other, [it only] conducts a monologue."[11] No wonder, animals fare indeed badly in terms of the relationality benchmark!

Besides, the members of the nonhuman themselves are contradistinguished on the basis of relationality. Levinas says: "animal need is liberated from vegetable dependence, but this liberation is itself dependence and uncertainty. The need of a wild animal is inseparable from struggle and fear; the exterior world from which it is liberated remains a threat. But need is also the time of labour: a relation with an other yielding its alterity."[12] Yet, these strictures made on the nonhuman kingdom raise more questions than answer them. Is not the criterion of liberation from a "vegetable dependence," which allegedly the human alone is capable of, indefensibly speciesist? If the nonhuman realm is, as it is alleged, inherently incapable of transcending the 'vegetable dependence', isn't the humankind ethically obliged to them? Could the nonhuman, as opposed to the human, be considered as leading an unethical (i.e., ethics-neutral) life? Is one species entitled to dictate an ethical code of conduct for another? Levinas' thought tends towards a human exclusivity, as only the human other, whose face is a face of deprivation demanding obligation from us.

Regarding the human and animal face, Levinas says that we "cannot entirely refuse the face of an animal." For instance, a dog "also has a face."[13] However, there is "priority" to human face as animal face is not in its "purest form." According to Levinas, only human beings possess a face from an ethical perspective. About our obligations to animals, Levinas' view is that "the ethical extends to all living beings," the reason being the fact that "we do not want to make an animal suffer needlessly." The ability to suffer pain is a prerogative, predictably, reserved, in the Levinasian reasoning, only to the higher order animals, even as one cannot pass over the ambiguity of the term "needlessly."

6. Privileging the Human

But why is the humankind entitled to such precedence in ethics? Levinas feels that in the evolutionary stage, the human is the most advanced

---

[11]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 72.

[12]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 116.

[13]Emmanuel Levinas, "The Paradox of Morality: An Interview with Emmanuel Levinas" (interviewed by Tamra Wright, Peter Hughes, and Alison Ainley), trans. Andrew Benjamin and Tamra Wright, in *The Provocation of Levinas: Rethinking the Other*, eds. Robert Bernasconi and David Wood, London: Routledge, 1988, 169.

species, which accords the human a special place in the scheme of life. He says: "the human is only the last stage of the evolution of the animal ... [and] that in relation to the animal, the human is a new phenomenon."[14] This evolutionary advancement, according to Levinas, was by and large, a unique ability to transcend one's self and be related to the other. This singularizes the human. Levinas observes:

> You ask at what moment one becomes a face. I do not know at what moment the human appears, but what I want to emphasize is that the human breaks in with pure being, which is always a persistence in being. This is my principal thesis. A being is something that is attached to being, to its own being. That is Darwin's idea. The being of animals is a struggle for life: a struggle of life without ethics. It is a question of might... The aim of being is being itself. However, with the appearance of the human, – and this is my entire philosophy – there is something more important than my life, and that is the life of the other. That is unreasonable. Man is an unreasonable animal.[15]

The human, indeed, is unreasonable in the sense that it can go beyond the dictates of reason to prioritize the need of the other, though still it is an act performed through the exercise of reason. More importantly, one wonders whether Levinas gives due acknowledgement to the common fountainhead of the evolutionary grid, of which the vaunted human faculties are but one element among a varied set of coordinates that informed the course of the progress of the cosmos. If the human is a new phenomenon, it probably is not the last of such phenomena as much as the succeeding species generally has been dependent on all the preceding genera and species. Levinas' ethics does not seem to regard the possibility that the world of both human and nonhuman, reason or no-reason, is subject to the more or less same 'laws' of the universe for eons, and that it has not only been a life of togetherness, now falling in, now falling out, now relational, now otherwise, but also that the nonhuman has been the condition for human life and prosperity, which will presumably fuel further stages of evolutionary unfolding.

Besides, if the "being of animals is a struggle for life" inherently, and human life is characterized by its relation to the "life of the other" and if this is further held out as the basis of human superiority, how far can one escape the charge of genetic fallacy? Evidently, both are inherited features

---

[14]Levinas, "The Paradox of Morality," 172.
[15]Levinas, "The Paradox of Morality," 172.

over which neither the human nor the nonhuman has any control. Moreover, whether the being of all the animals is a greater struggle for life than it is for human beings needs more study. Numerous studies concerning animal love for the members of its own species, its own young ones, instances of selfless sacrifice for the members of its own species and for protecting the members of other species, including the human, with varying degrees of conclusiveness have come in. (Un)fortunately, the human can only analyse with anthropomorphic tools, as much as the nonhuman approaches life with tools characteristic to them.

7. Locating the Human in the Evolutionary Grid

The impulse to privilege the human over the nonhuman tapers off as the human is viewed in the cosmic evolutionary perspective of thousands of millennia. It is commonplace that the Earth and its contents have been shaped over billions of years, that humanity itself is nature-became-self-conscious, and that the human complexity is, a chronological step ahead of and predicated on animal innocence. Even a schoolboy knows that the Earth itself is a puny planetary body, with the 'great' Sun and other planets being but tiny outstations in our galaxy which itself is only a miniscule part of the yet uncharted cosmos.

Even as Levinas draws an absolute and unbridgeable ethical divide between the human and animal that subsumes all that is nonhuman, it seems, in the evolutionary course of the human and nonhuman realms, dependency and complexity of being are directly proportional. The earlier evolutionary products are more self-reliant and hence less dependent on the later ones which owe their existence to the earlier ones. Human being the last to come and in spite of being the most complex being yet, on the world stage, are paradoxically the most dependent, if poorly acknowledged, on the earlier evolutionary products. Hence, when Levinas declares that "the prototype of this [ethics] is human ethics,"[16] it smacks, to say the least, of human chauvinism.

However, parallel to the biological evolutionary course, even the much prated human ethics appears to be predicated on the prehuman instinctual world. Nietzsche considers the entire morality as based on animality, and human as the intruder who has unlawfully appropriated the animal ethics: "the beginnings of justice, as of prudence, moderation, bravery ... are animals: a consequence of that drive which teaches us to

[16]Levinas, "The Paradox of Morality," 172.

seek food and elude enemies... [I]t is not improper to describe the entire phenomenon of morality as animal."[17] Besides, the human essence, if any, came to be defined in terms of animals: "he [human] envied the wildest, most courageous animals and robbed all their virtues; only thus did he become man."[18]

8. Towards Interdependence

The awareness of the dependence of the human upon the nonhuman is attested by all traditional societies and is best illustrated in the aboriginal totem. Totemism, a vestige of Palaeolithic life and an anthropologist's hobbyhorse, by its identification of a hunting-gathering clan with a species of plant or animal underscores its unity with the nonhuman. Totemic beliefs, a spin off from human intercourse with the nonhuman for ages, viewed nature as pulsating with life. Inorganic matter hardly existed. For most autochthonous societies, the human and the nonhuman realms were undifferentiated. Gary Snyder observes: "in Pueblo societies a kind of ultimate democracy is practised. Plants and animals are also people, and, through certain rituals and dances, are given a place and a voice in the political discussions of the humans."[19]

That the biblical 'Fall' is more an admonition about the dangers consequent on a turn from hunting gathering to agriculture than any grave transgression of a theological command is no less platitudinous than the proposition that starvation, malnutrition, warfare, and pestilence are traceable to agriculture and urbanization, both of which together, in turn, are traceable to the human-nonhuman rupture. Significantly, many major world religions make deliberate effort, if they have not sprung up precisely for this purpose, to restore the organic human-nonhuman unity of the past. The nondual philosophy expatiated upon in the South Asian religions like Hinduism, the Buddhist denial of self and God, Jainist *ahimsa* or nonviolence have long been viewed as strictures against the attendant dangers of the human-nonhuman split. Even as these religions are wary about valuing the nonhuman for its intrinsic and ultimate worth, the sacrality of the nonhuman has been fundamental to them. No wonder, all

---

[17]Friedrich Nietzsche, *Daybreak*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997, 26.

[18]Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, New York: Penguin, 1980, 6.

[19]Max Oelschlaeger, *The Idea of Wilderness: From Prehistory to the Age of Ecology*, New Haven: Yale UP, 1991, 104.

enduring spiritual postures have had an abiding material underpinning that seeks to ensure best quality of life to everyone. Christianity may fare rather poorly when it comes to everyone.

In the Palaeolithic phase, the human beings were neither specially privileged nor separate from the rest of nature that was thought to be alive and filled with spirits. In such an equitable dispensation, hierarchization was uncalled for. Many scholars have referred to the Palaeolithic belief in a "primeval kinship with all creatures of the living world and to the essential continuity among them all." A sense of shared essence among all creatures marked the prehistoric era which believed that "their external forms were interchangeable." The living organism of the world "includes all that grows and all that moves about in air and sky, on earth, below the earth, and in the sea; it includes even the gods and the ever bearing earth in her totality."[20] The immanent gods of prehistory were supplanted by the transcendent ones only in the agricultural era. In South Asia, the resistance against the Vedic transcendent deities by the Jaina and Buddhist thoughts may be seen largely as an attempt to resituate humanity back on this world. Yet, as they passionately and ultimately sought liberation from the world, which to them was a bondage of sorts debunked the real status accorded to the nonhuman in such worldviews. Even the celebrated nondualist philosophies, even as they swear by the 'essential' identity of everything, locate the nonhuman only outside the centre.

The turn from hunting foraging to agriculture dealt a lasting and lethal blow to the human-nonhuman communion. Agriculture drew the boundary between natural and cultural; it made distinctions between fields and forests, seedlings and weeds, crops and wilderness, domestic and wild. The interdependence got easily snapped as the produce in agriculture was viewed as one acquired through the sweat of the human brow rather than the bounty of the earth. Max Oelschlaeger refers to the inevitability of philosophy and theology in the new epoch: "once the agricultural turn was made, philosophy and theology sprang forth with a vengeance."[21] Significantly, it is with the emergence of agriculture with its attendant philosophy and theology, the appraisal of the nonhuman occurs with abandon, and humanization enters centre stage with a bang. If anything, Levinas was against such a philosophic violence of valuing the other. As

---

[20]Karl W. Luckert, *The Navajo Hunter Tradition*, Tucson: Arizona UP, 1975, 133.
[21]Oelschlaeger, *The Idea of Wilderness*, 29.

Levinas puts it, "the relation between the other and me, which dawns forth in his expression, issues neither in number nor in [*sic*] concept."[22] Levinas rejects the violence in conceptualizing and philosophizing the other. Levinas' ethics is basically a relationship with facing the other. "For Levinas, to decode the face in the manner of other signs would be to reduce it violently, to turn it – horribly, into a mask."[23] The prephilosophic enterprise that ethics is for Levinas, the Palaeolithic interdependence of the human and nonhuman may seem to best approximate such an ethical relation. With a little oversimplification, one might say that the Palaeolithic ethics was not only preontological, which stressed the responsibility for the other (human and nonhuman) by facing the other but performative as well.

A restoration of the communion and sacrality of the Paleo-ecologic paradigm, being well-nigh impossible, the feasibility of a postmodern hierophany is an option open before the humans. This requires the dawn of a new awareness in humans that they are – consequence of the world than its cause; not being but becoming; not the privileged children created in the image of a god but just one among numerous coordinates of creative evolutionary process; rather than arbiters of value on all others, they are a spin-off in the grid of value coordinates themselves. Human beings cannot delude themselves that creative evolution is for them or that they mark the consummation of the universe, instead, they should realize the plurality of becoming in which everyone has a vital, if not equal stake. As life on earth is viewed as a joint venture, the exclusionary humanist posture will give way to the restitution of interdependence and sacrality of the nonhuman.

9. Re-visioning Levinas

Levinas' ethics predicated exclusively on the human other, hence, breaks at its centre as it cannot take the weight of the interrelatedness of the nonhuman. A host of awareness programmes on environmental ethics is more symptomatic of the malaise than remedy, for any division into human ethics, animal ethics, environmental ethics, etc., is nothing short of tyranny of a humanized ethics. Only a comprehensive ethics based on the creative evolution of becoming in the cosmic stage alone is the answer because we live in a reciprocally constituted existential realm. Before looking into the possibility of such a postmodern sacrality and

---

[22]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 194.

[23]Robbins, *Altered Reading*, 60.

interdependence, a few remarks on Levinas' views on literature are in place.

There is a definitive antipathy to art and literature in Levinas' ethics, as he considers art and literature as a representation of ontology as much removed from truth as poetry for Plato. Levinas distrusts art and rhetoric because they philosophise, represent, speak for, and in the process, manipulate the other. Literature and its critical exegesis, both being meaning conferring activities, work by violence and ontology. Narrative fiction as opposed to other literary genres, is falsification as it fails to grant due credit to the priority of the relation with the other. Colin Davis says: "Levinas' hostility to art and literature undergoes shifts ... but he does not ... soften his position on *narrative*."[24] Davis goes on to say that because of Levinas' intransigence with regard to narratives, the possibility of an encounter with the other, which is central to the Levinasian oeuvre, in novels, is missing.

Significantly, many of Levinas' own books are commentaries on the Talmud and he considers religious scriptures as pre-eminently an encounter with the other. Levinas says: "writing is always prescription and ethics, the word of God which commands me and dedicates me to other."[25] He grants the status of religious books to some "so-called national literatures, Shakespeare and Moliere, Dante and Cervantes, Goethe and Pushkin." Levinas also accepts that such national literatures "may also be inspired, in the sense of embodying an ethical exposure to the other which ensures that they are always available to fresh exegesis because they mean more than they say."[26] Evidently, Levinas accords a privileged status to some works, which he refuses to others.

Levinas rejects narratives, because they, according to him, impose meaning and, hence, stand in the way of one's exposure to the other. However, as all language use being story and rhetoric, there appears to be no viable alternative for the humans, and fighting against story is always a losing battle as Levinas' own project indicates. Nobody else was more aware of it than Levinas himself about his own un-meditated slip into narrativization in *Totality and Infinity*. Hence, the unavailing struggle to

---

[24]Colin Davis, *After Poststructuralism: Reading Stories and Theory*, London: Routledge, 2004, 92.

[25]Emmanuel Levinas, *L'Au-dela du verset: Lectures et discours talmudiques*. Paris: Minuit, 1982, cited in Davis, *After Poststructuralism*, 94.

[26]Davis, *After Poststructuralism*, 94.

steer clear of emplotment and thematization in his later masterpiece *Otherwise than Being* is evidently attempting yet again the impossible. In trying to be untrammelled from the spectre of stories, *Otherwise than Being*, as Davis observes, is on course of "generating a discourse which is intensely focused on its own impossibility."[27]

If the key takeaway in Levinas' thought is the realization of the unconditional responsibility for the other in our lives, and if Levinas' own works become, as Critchley puts it, "the performative enactment of ethical writing,"[28] all works, literary or otherwise, may unwork a petrified philosophy and become an instrument of exposure to the other. The same tenor is maintained by Eaglestone who says that Levinas' book "echoes literary writing" and, hence, could form "a part of literature" and will logically lead to "opening up literature to the possibility of ethical saying."[29] This for Eaglestone is equally true of criticism, for "critical writing like philosophy must be a continual process of interruption."[30] Again, Jill Robbins argues that Levinas' aim is not to discredit art but to unwork ontology and, hence, great art, which possesses the dignity of sacred texts, exposes one to the other. Levinas is concerned about "art in relation to ethics, interruption than ontology."[31]

10. Conclusion: Acknowledging the Sacrality of the Universe

Levinasian ethics is in need of re-visioning for hierophanic postmodern life, which is deeply in fellowship with the nonhuman, much like the Palaeolithic phase, yet, conserving reason, aesthetics, and the gods. Levinas' 'other' should be a more capacious vehicle with everyone on board. A comprehensive ethics that Levinas describes as a pre-originary relation that happens in an "anteriority anterior to any representable anteriority"[32] should include everyone, human and nonhuman. Yet, Levinas has, if rather unwittingly, provided the optimal philosophical framework for upholding the moral worth of the nonhuman. Hence, the postmodern wilderness derives succour only from, as Arran

---

[27]Davis, *After Poststructuralism*, 98.

[28]Simon Critchley, *The Ethics of Deconstruction: Derrida and Levinas*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1992, 8.

[29]Robert Eaglestone, *Ethical Criticism: Reading after Levinas*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1997, 162.

[30]Eaglestone, *Ethical Criticism*, 168.

[31]Eaglestone, *Ethical Criticism*, 154.

[32]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 195.

Gare puts it, "a 'polyphonic' grand narrative" that "would have all the virtues of a conception of history as a struggle for both human and animal emancipation – without having to make any dubious claims for cosmic purpose and a teleology preexisting history."[33] Finally, to know that each and everyone is intrinsically worthy and nonpareil is the groundwork for embarking on the possibility of a mutually assured survival (as opposed to mutually assured destruction) and is perhaps a good enough reason for giving the nonhuman its due.

[33]Arran Gare, "The Postmodernism of Deep Ecology, the Deep Ecology of Postmodernism, and Grand Narratives," in Eric Katz *et al*, eds., *Beneath the Surface: Critical Essays in the Philosophy of Deep Ecology*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000, 209.

Journal of Dharma 34, 2 (April-June 2009), 247-265

PHILOSOPHY AND ETHICS IN DEFENCE OF A CULTURE OF LIFE

Saju Chackalackal♦

1. Introduction

Whatever be the traditional understanding about philosophy, to my mind, it stands for the perspective that a person, individually or collectively, accepts, cherishes, and upholds in the web of human relationships and human actions with a view to enhance life in its multifarious dimensions. Technically, especially within the academic circles, however, ethics or practical philosophy has been identified as that discipline which provides us with a tool to distinguish between right and wrong arguments, with a hope to lead human agents to maximise good actions[1] and minimise bad actions. Hence, it is expected of a philosophical deliberation upon life to distinguish between right and wrong perspectives and arguments that are said to be at the back of many a human action with which we come across especially in the context of bioethics and related issues. Although better clarity can be legitimately expected of such an exercise, I do not intent, and I do not dare to hope, to handing down a set of perfectly acceptable moral conclusions; instead, what I propose to do here is only to highlight a couple of philosophical positions, which might enable us – who face the muddled waters of life and death issues in the modern world of advanced technological interventions – to arrive at sound arguments and life enhancing perspectives. For, the aim of humanity as a whole must be to evolve a culture of life, a situation where all would subscribe to a positive view of life and shape a creative way of life, culminating in the enhancement of both life and culture.

It should come as no surprise that bioethics has suddenly taken central stage, with many vital issues of life such as birth and death being

---

♦**Dr. Saju Chackalackal** CMI holds a Ph.D. in Philosophy; he is an associate professor of philosophy at Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bangalore and the chief editor of *Journal of Dharma*. His published works include *Ramayana and the Indian Ideal* (1992), *Euthanasia* (2000), and *Unity of Knowing and Acting in Kant* (2002).

[1]Aristotle claims thus: "Every art and every inquiry, and similarly every action and pursuit is thought to aim at some good; and for this reason the good has rightly been declared to be that at which all things aim." *The Nichomachean Ethics*, trans. W. D. Ross, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925, reprinted in R. McKeon, ed., *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, New York: Random House, 1941, 935.

© 2009 *Journal of Dharma: Dharmaram Journal of Religions and Philosophies* (Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bangalore), ISSN: 0253-7222

affected by the technological developments in the field of medicine and healthcare. The conflicts arising from a bifurcation of professional approach in these fields and the ethical considerations concerns all of us; for, they all address the questions of how we treat human beings, in the specific contexts of the facts and frailties of human life. Unfortunately, as we could see from most of the deliberations we have either in the academic or political circles, passion runs high and the likelihood of resolutions runs quite low.

In a world of constant flux, especially in the context of scientific advances, it is, indeed, necessary that we continue to discuss moral issues related to life, ranging from the issues related to pre-birth to post-death. Although technical expertise in various fields related to bioethics is certainly a must to arrive at more reasonable and humane conclusions, it does not mean that only experts (for example, scientists involved in assisted reproductive technologies, stem cell research, or genetic engineering and the moral theorists) can have an opinion and finally take conclusions. We should see them as problems faced by the entire humanity in the situations in which scientific intervention or medical care is essential. Indeed, as Paul Ramsey puts it, "birth and death, illness and injury are not simply events the doctor attends. They are moments in every human life."[2]

2. An Endangered Human Life

It is true that human beings have been involved both in the acts of destroying and enhancing life in various forms. However, despite the destructive activities initiated by many a member of the human species, nature, by its own ways, and in and through a dynamic, conscious, affirmative, and cooperative involvement of the majority of human beings, has been maintaining various cultures of life all through the human history. In fact, while some consciously tried to disrupt the culture of life that existed and flourished, there were equally – or, say, more effective – powerful attempts on the part of others to defend, safeguard, protect, preserve, and enhance life, especially human life, itself being the foundation of the values we cherish. The primacy enjoyed by human life among all forms of life has not yet been debased, which I consider to be

---

[2]Paul Ramsey, *The Patient as Person*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970, xi.

the most optimistic result of a continued human quest for development, permanence, and excellence.

However, in the wake of an emerging exclusive thrust on values such as quality, economy, efficiency, etc., which finally turn out to be counterproductive to a large extent, and the manipulative strategies of the vested interests, including the *almighty* media of the twenty-first century and the remotely controlled, corrupt governments whose legislations and governance increasingly have nothing to do with the moral foundations of humanity, our age witnesses a growing tendency to enthrone a culture of death in place of life. Although its votaries are comparatively smaller in numbers, the reign of a culture of death tends to be catching up more with the so-called elite and the economically and socially well-paced groups, most of them belonging to the upper strata of the society, to whose standards of behaviour the majority look up and try to emulate. The emphasis on quality of life in every sphere, and the projections of a possible glossy and picturesque quality enhancement thrust (against the more demanding, ever-dragging and -increasing quantity considerations) in private as well as social life create a false aura of goodness and rightness among the naïve and the innocent.

In this context we should distinguish between two groups: the first, endorsing a culture of death as aggressively as possible, of whom at least a minority making economic and career advantage (mostly at the cost of human lives), and the second, adopting a lethargic insensitivity to the life of others. Although the first seems to be dangerous, as this group is more outspoken, the second is debasing the foundations of value of life in an indirect but very subtle way. The utter lack of concern for the lives of many a person in the society – especially those who are ill treated either by neglect in the family or as a result of social ostracism – is absolutely outrageous. There is an unheard cry for attention and openness towards many unbecoming practices meted out to human beings themselves in the neighbourhood of almost all of us. How many of us dare to respond, to take up the challenges, and face the uncertainties? The resulting personal initiatives would definitely make a difference, hopefully resulting in launching a positive transformation both in outlook and action patterns in the life of the society at large.

3. Assault on Life from Medical Field

Life is the central focus of medical science. The very purpose for which medical science exists is to promote, support, and enhance life in all forms, and at all levels of existence. The service rendered by millions of healthcare personnel all over the world is, indeed, a great service rendered to the humanity as a whole. However, proponents of a culture of death do not hesitate to drag medical science as well as healthcare personnel into life-denying compromises and controversies around issues of human life. It is alarming to note the opinion of a medical historian, himself a surgeon, Shurwin B. Nuland: "The patient is every day less a human being and more a complicated challenge in intensive care, testing the genius of some of the most brilliantly aggressive of the hospital's clinical warriors."[3] In fact, the very foundation upon which medical science is built, and is thriving on, is life itself; the very purpose of medicine itself – traditionally identified as "cure and care" – is to promote, support, and enhance human life in its multifarious forms. The recent thrust on quality healthcare, though praiseworthy as far as the effectiveness and efficiency are concerned, has caused the sidetracking of at least one important dimension of healthcare, i.e., the caring dimension (due to an over-emphasis on the curative procedures, which bring about tangible and immediate results).

Further, the major interests of a large group of physicians belonging to the modern globalised era lie in lifestyle and livelihood; unfortunately, the radical changes in healthcare delivery system promote the role of the physician as a clinical and economic manager rather than a professionally committed healthcare animator who has to awaken everyone involved to take life-enhancing decisions and to put them into practice, even if it were to personally inconvenience him or her, and thus to be an advocate of life in any patient.[4] The economic and career advantages scrupulously enjoyed

---

[3]Shurwin B. Nuland, *How We Die: Reflections on Life's Final Chapter*, New York: Alfred A. Knopt, 1994, 149. However, I am proud to admit that my personal association with medical professionals has always been very enriching and life-affirming. Their unflinching commitment in catering to human life – even when some of them were at the brink of death or 'inhumane' existence, according to the standards accepted by the culture of death proponents – is praiseworthy and promising.

[4]The Hippocratic Oath (5th century BCE) – both in its classical and many modern versions, taken by the medical professional as they begin their medical practice – obviously expresses the positive affirmation of human life. A pertinent passage in the Oath reads: "I will neither give a deadly drug to anybody who asked

by such tend to jeopardise the prospects of even those who are willing to spend their lives for the sake of promoting human life. Further, this tends to dictate a poor response on the part of many physicians in availing themselves for life enhancement programmes and procedures in healthcare.

4. Modern Democracies and Culture of Death

Along with and apart from the healthcare sector, more serious danger lurks in the legislative authorities and judiciary. Although many nations apparently and outwardly subscribe to democratic form of governance, the actual legislative procedures – and to a great extent, even the functioning of the judiciary – are being manoeuvred by a powerful minority that has access to the inner sanctuaries and strongholds of political clout.

The natural and proclaimed aim of any state being the protection and enhancement of the public welfare or the common good, all members of the legislature and the judiciary have a responsibility to make sure that every adopted step ensures the realization of the same end. Human life is the basic substratum of this common good; in fact, in the absence of human life, there does not arise any consideration for common good at all. Then, naturally, the members of the legislature and judiciary have a bounden responsibility to ensure that life is respected, protected, and augmented through the enactment of laws and judicial activities. Any government and legal system that are accepted by the people should validate itself in terms of sound moral foundations; moreover, exercise of their powers could qualify to be moral only when it ultimately counters life negation in every form, and positively results in life affirmation and total life enhancement of the society. For example, legalisation of abortion, euthanasia, etc. – which has made out to be morally *valid* and legally *acceptable* in many democracies, through the concerted effort of legislative, executive, and judiciary bodies in any given state, with the powerful backup of the vested interests – clearly goes against the demands

---

for it, nor will I make a suggestion to this effect. Similarly, I will not give to a woman an abortive remedy." Ludwig Edelstein, trans., *The Hippocratic Oath: Text, Translation, and Interpretation*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1943. However, in the context of the present day practices upheld by many of these professionals, some tend to sarcastically rename the Oath as "Hypocritic Oath." I am of the opinion that the collapse of Hippocratic tradition in the field of medicine and healthcare signals a catastrophe in the contemporary human history, as respect and reverence to human life run alarmingly too low.

of a life affirming moral system. Certainly, the moral foundations of the authority of such a state are challengeable. The moral foundations of the society are eroding due to a lack of commitment on the part of the state, the acclaimed custodian and protector of the age-old value systems and foundations of human life. The net result of all these is that the future of humanity appears to be so bleak from the perspective of the enhancement of value of life.

Through the powerful backing of the media – enjoying a wider reach in terms of the globalised coverage – a minority is capable of manipulating the majority opinion to such an extent that what is finally legislated by the ruling government is apparently acclaimed to be the choice of the majority! The subtle manner adopted in this game is being sustained by the intelligence and finances lavishly supplied by multinational companies, whose stakes all over the world continue to determine and change the course of events in human history and cultures.

The strategic manoeuvring employed by the so-called developed world in manipulating a large majority of the human race results in an almost total neglect and denial of life of those humans who are categorised to be of sub-human or even of animal status (for example, consider the treatment meted out to the prisoners of war in the recent Afghan and Iraq conflicts).[5] This distressing situation calls for a positive involvement on the part of those who, finally, turn out to be the losers of life. While the 'divide and rule' policy will be continuously employed by these forces to get their selfish designs fulfilled by hook or crook, others have to see to it that they do not become self-annihilating preys in the hands of the proponents of a culture of death. The self-alienating and destructive strategies of individuals as well as nations should be replaced by a strong collective will that is capable of binding and holding together the fragile lives of many a human being, which, in turn, would become the strongest force on the face of the earth, if groomed properly.

---

[5]If we objectively analyse what had been happening before and after 9/11 all over the world, the number of people who have been killed has gone up without any due proportion, the respect and reverence accorded to human life have suffered enormously, especially in dealing with the lives of Afro-Asians, and, finally, the world is gradually becoming the worst place to live in as human life is endangered and uncertainties are building up from all corners.

5. Challenges to Life from Consequentialism

There is an alarming tendency, especially among a group of intellectuals – whose presence, penetration, and activity are all pervasive among the national and international media and bureaucracies – who tend to value only those human lives which are qualitatively better placed. In fact, they subscribe to and practice a preferential option for the *best*, based on qualitative utility concerns. Even in 1888, Nietzsche, the proponent of *will to power*, wrote as follows:

> The invalid is a parasite on society. In a certain state it is indecent to go on living. To vegetate on in cowardly dependence on physicians and medicaments after the meaning of life, [or] the *right* to life, has been lost; [It] ought to entail the profound contempt of society. Physicians, in their turn, ought to be the communicators of this contempt – not prescriptions, but every day a fresh dose of *disgust* with their patients... To create a new responsibility, that of the physician, in all cases in which the highest interest of life, of *ascending* life, demands the most ruthless suppression and sequestration of degenerating life – for example, in determining the right to reproduce, the right to be born, the right to live..., to die proudly when it is no longer possible to live proudly. Death of one's own free choice, death at the proper time, with a clear head and with joyfulness, consummated in the midst of children and witnesses: so that an actual leave-taking is possible while he who is leaving *is still there*, likewise an actual evolution of what has been desired and what achieved in life, an *adding-up* of life – all this is in contrast to the pitiable and horrible comedy Christianity has made of the hour of death.[6]

This attitude of absolute personal autonomy in birth, life, and death, proposed by Nietzsche seems to have caught up with the present day generation in a far more subtle manner.

Following, perhaps, the footsteps of Nietzsche, there are many contemporary philosophers who argue for absolute autonomy in the case of life and death decisions. A dangerous line of argument, for example, is initiated by Peter Singer, the most vibrant philosophical exponent of consequentialist approach to ethics in the West and the one who could be

---

[6]Fredrick Nietzsche, *The Twilight of the Idols* in *The Twilight of the Idols and The Anarchist*, London: Penguin, 1990, 98.

considered most responsible for the startling changes in the moral attitude that seem to be fashionable today, in the following passage:

> ... the fact that a being is a human being, in the sense of a member of the species Homo sapiens, is *not relevant* to the wrongness of killing it; it is, rather, characteristics like rationality, autonomy, and self-consciousness that make a difference. Infants lack these characteristics. Killing them, therefore, cannot be equated with killing normal human beings, or any other self-conscious beings.[7]

The slippery slope is obvious in the sentence that follows the quoted passage. He continues: "This conclusion is not limited to infants..." The culture of death defended by Singer extends its wings far and wide. After having endorsed the method of "suicide machine" developed and *prescribed* by Dr. Jack Kevorkian, a Michigan Pathologist, Singer narrates the "successful saga" of those proponents of voluntary euthanasia as follows:

> There is now one country in which doctors can openly *help* their patients to die in a peaceful and dignified way. In the Netherlands, a series of court cases during the 1980s upheld a doctor's right to assist a patient to die, even if that assistance amounted to giving the patient a lethal injection. Doctors in the Netherlands who comply with certain guidelines ... can now quite openly carry out euthanasia and can report this on the death certificate without fear of prosecution. It has been estimated that about 2,300 deaths each year result from euthanasia carried out in this way.[8]

---

[7]Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics*, 2nd Edition, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, 182; emphasis added. In this connection it would be worth turning to some of the assumptions of Singer, which are farfetched and baseless. For example, he categorically asserts in his *Practical Ethics* that "the parents do not want the disabled child to live" (183). If this assertion were true, how come that many disabled children continue to live, mostly with their own biological parents? Later, in the same work he holds that life begins in any "morally significant sense when there is awareness of one's existence over time. The metaphor of life as a journey also provides a reason for holding that in infancy life's voyage has scarcely begun" (189-190). The implied sense of the text is that the unborn and the newly born do not deserve the rights accessible to the grownups; the value of their existence is a concession from the *able* and "rational, autonomous and self-conscious" *in actuality*. What does he refer to as "morally significant"? Can it be based on a mere metaphor, "life as a journey"?

[8]Singer, *Practical Ethics*, 176-178; emphasis added.

A glossy but wrong understanding of peace and dignity at the deathbed is proposed to bypass the moral vacuum resulting from the insensitivity to life and its dynamics, when it concerns the lives of the yet-to-be-born, yet-to-be-self-conscious, dependent and disabled, sick and dying. It is put forth as the only way to enhance the standards of living and the quality of life of those who are already born and grown up, especially in the context of the limited available resources in this world. If at all anybody feels guilty in adopting such an approach, Singer recommends an abandoning of "those doctrines about the sanctity of human life,"[9] as such doctrines tend to 'emotionally' and 'intellectually' curtail the culture of death unleashed by him and other subscribers. According to Singer, acceptance of any doctrine founded on the inherent value of life and its inviolability is tantamount to "the refusal to accept killing."[10]

We have no difficulty in accepting death, as it is inherently part of life itself. In fact, acceptance of death should accompany a properly valid moral perspective. Equating death with killing, however, is a farfetched attempt, and a morally unacceptable stand, irrespective of the mode and the need of killing, especially when it comes to taking the life of a human being – in any form.

6. Kantian Firm Yeah to Life: A Paradigm from the History of Philosophy

The continued assault on human life calls for serious concern from every reflecting human being. While the number of subscribers of consequentialism and like-minded theories goes up, and the traditional ethical doctrines seem to be almost neglected, we shall not forget the fact that millions of people still continue to subscribe to traditional religious ethical positions; moreover, there are also many an ethical doctrine proposed by various philosophers – I do not mean to say that all such doctrines are perfect and foolproof in their content and approach – which uphold the value of human life as the most important goal in life. One

---

[9]Singer, *Practical Ethics*, 175. In another book, *Rethinking Life and Death: The Collapse of our Traditional Ethics*, Singer announced the death of "old ethics," and proposed that a "new ethical approach" is on its way, although its definitive shape is still to be determined. Thus, according to him, the view of morality coming down to us through the centuries and rooted in various ethical traditions having their foundation in religious faith is outdated and no more operational.

[10]Singer, *Practical Ethics*, 175.

such doctrine can be located in the writings of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), who has turned out to be a veteran as well as a contentious figure in the field of ethical deliberations.

Human life assumes the central position in the ethical deliberations of Kant. To him, a human person is an end in himself or herself, and there shall be no other end for any human action. Human beings, according to him, assume this central role as they are capable of giving a law unto themselves, and as they are capable of instilling purposiveness into the nature as a whole. In his quest to epitomise human nature as the highest state of existence in nature, Kant insists that everyone should be a moral being, by living a life in accordance with the moral law. The most important principle that is proposed by Kant for moral application is his categorical imperative. For him, it is the fundamental principle of all reasoning and acting, because "everyone does, in fact, decide by this rule whether actions are morally good or bad."[11] The categorical imperative becomes the primary criterion in deciding the course of action for an individual person. He holds that "... human reason, with this compass in hand, is well able to distinguish, in all cases that present themselves, what is good or evil, right or wrong; ... there is no need of science or philosophy for knowing what one has to do in order to be honest and good, and indeed to be wise and virtuous."[12] Moreover, only those actions that are compatible with autonomy of the will (this being a basic aspect of the categorical imperative) are permitted, while those that do not harmonize with the categorical imperative are considered to be forbidden.

The categorical imperative, then, commands us absolutely either to do an action or to refrain from doing it, insisting on unconditional obedience to the moral law, and expressing a strict practical necessitation or obligation and universal validity. That means, any particular moral law must be objective and beyond personal limits, that it cannot be determined by the desires or inclinations of a particular individual. It must also be impartially applicable among various individuals at all times, allowing no exception as to the changing circumstances and needs: the moral law, according to Kant, is not different for different times and different peoples. Incorporating the necessary and universal characteristics of the categorical imperative, he has expressed the principle (in its strict form, according to

---

[11]Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, Ak. V, 69 (Beck 72).
[12]Kant, *Groundwork*, Ak. IV, 404 (Paton 71-72).

Kant) as follows: "*act on the maxim which can at the same time be made a universal law.*"[13]

The categorical imperative is a self-legislated law, which is at the same time autonomous and universal. Therefore, it is said to be a legislation effected by "each for all and all for each."[14] The nature of the categorical imperative as a universal law stresses that no rule of action is morally acceptable which cannot be considered as a law applicable to everyone and legislated by everyone. The fact that all rational beings are equally self-legislative with regard to the moral law indicates an ideal and spontaneous movement in the direction of forming a community based on the common law leading to a harmonization of all ends. From the stage of accepting a maxim (a subjective principle animating an action on the part of the individual) as a practical rule, moral deliberation concerns itself not primarily with interests of a particular individual or a limited group of individuals but with possibility of a universal community of free men. This is because making a universal law on the part of the moral agent is always possible only in terms of a moral matrix that is communitarian as well as universal in character; this points to the possibility of a kingdom of ends. In a kingdom of ends everyone treats oneself and others never merely as means; instead taking into account the self-legislating autonomous nature into consideration, all treat others as ends-in-themselves and thus they respect the humanity shared by all human beings. This kingdom ensues both from the power of legislating for oneself, and the imperative to treat everyone else as an end-in-itself.[15]

According to Kant, a human being is endowed with three original drives or predispositions the fulfilment or realization of which would be

---

[13]Kant, *Groundwork*, Ak. IV, 436-37 (Paton 104). Although Kant has stated that there is only one categorical imperative, he later presents us with as many as five (or more) formulations. See Kant, *Groundwork*, Ak. IV, 421-438 (Paton 88-106).

[14]Llamzon, *Reason, Experience and the Moral Life*, 39.

[15]The kingdom of ends, depicted as a perfect ideal state of harmonious existence of individuals in a community, may be seen as a moral utopia far removed from the actual life of human beings which often functions without regard to what ought to be done or not to be done. Kant admits that it can never be fully realized within the order of nature, or at least, that we cannot be apodictically certain about reaching it. In Kant's scheme, however, it is definitely "a practical ideal which must necessarily serve as a model which all finite rational beings must strive toward even though they cannot reach it." Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, Ak. V, 32 (Beck 33).

the key to a truly human existence and the attainment of the highest good in the moral world. They are the predispositions to animality, to humanity, and to personality.[16] Animality is our predisposition as a physical being, which strives for self-preservation and preservation of the species as a whole. In other words, it involves our pre-rational or instinctual basis that preserves, propagates, and cares for our own physical being and our offspring. The predisposition to humanity lays stress on our social being, which sees to it that our natural self-development is achieved, whereby we also acquire worth in the opinion of others.[17] Left to itself, it considers man as a rational animal, and is said to involve a capacity to use reason in the service of inclinations. However, Kant holds that the characteristic of humanity is the power to set an end and to work towards its realization, which involves our capacity to choose, and to desire. The third, the predisposition to personality is our power to adopt the moral law as the end, and our consciousness of being obligated to respect it. So, going beyond the concept of a mere rational animal, a human being is considered as a moral and responsible agent. Despite the fact that the first two may be employed against our moral predisposition, for Kant, all of them are truly "predispositions *toward good* (they enjoin the observance of the law)."[18] Animality and humanity can become unworthy of a human being when they are employed against the moral law, thus against the predisposition to personality. The true nature of a human being can be realized only when all of these operate in a concerted and integrated manner, where, specifically, respect for the moral law, which is our predisposition to personality, assumes the decisive role.

Man, for Kant, is the final end of creation, as without man the mutuality of the subordinated purposes would have no ultimate point of reference. As man by nature is oriented towards morality, and aims at the realization of the highest good in the world, Kant assumes that there shall not arise a further question as to why man is taken to be the final end. Thus, a teleological outlook on nature leads us to picture the whole world as a system that culminates in man as its ultimate purpose, its final end. That is, insofar as we consider man (not merely as an animal) as endowed

---

[16]Kant, *Religion*, Ak. VI, 26-27 (Greene & Hudson 22-23); see also Allison, *Kant's Theory of Freedom*, pages 148-49; Sullivan, *Immanuel Kant's Moral Theory*, 237.

[17]Kant, *Anthropology* (Dowdell), 270; Kant, *Religion*, Ak. VI, 26 (Greene & Hudson 21).

[18]Kant, *Religion*, Ak. VI, 28 (Greene & Hudson 23).

with rationality and the capacity to guide his actions by the moral law, to that extent we can say that he is the ultimate purpose of nature on earth.

There is, therefore, a responsibility on the part of a human being "to prepare him for what he must do himself in order to be a final purpose;"[19] that is, everyone has to constantly engage in the realization of the moral nature and, thus, the highest good by acting according to principles. So, a human being moulds nature as a purpose having one's own purpose of realizing the highest good at its zenith, not according to any external stimuli or principles, but primarily by the self-given purposes. Realizing one's vocation as a human being together with working towards its realization by moral practice in freedom constitutes our ultimate aim; according to Kant, its realization constitutes culture. It is human capacity to set purposes or ends in accordance with the moral law, and to coordinate all faculties towards its realization. As he puts it, culture "is the aptitude and practical skill for all kinds of purposes for which nature (external and internal) can be used by him."[20]

The highest good is said to be "attainable through human collaboration."[21] Community, for Kant, is not a mere banding together of individuals (even with common purposes),[22] but presupposes the intelligible and intersubjective existence of human beings that makes conscious cooperation possible. This is unique, as a human community does emerge neither merely from intellectual activities (as in the case of pure rational beings) nor from mere feelings of instinct (as in the case of animals) but in the ingenious integration of both in reflection. It is this process that results in evolving a culture, where, as Kant conceives it in his three *Critiques*, reason "is free from all private purposes" and "determines our will to impart to the sensuous world the form of a system of rational beings,"[23] thus evolving the higher dimensions of humanity in community.

---

[19]Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, §83, Ak. V, 431 (Bernard 281).

[20]Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, §83, Ak. V, 430 (Bernard 279). This [practical] skill consists in disciplining, that includes "the freeing of the will from the despotism of desires ... according as the purposes of reason require" Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, §83, Ak. V, 432 (Bernard 282).

[21]Kant, *On the Old Saw*, Ak. VIII, 280n (Ashton 47).

[22]Kant writes: "Man was not meant to belong to a herd like the domesticated animals, but rather, like the bee, to belong to a hive community. It is necessary for him always to be a member of some civil society" *Anthropology* (Dowdell), 247.

[23]Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A813/B841 and Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, Ak. V, 43 (Beck 45), respectively.

The ultimate end of achieving culture being the realization of the Kingdom of Ends, as conceived in Kant's practical philosophy, community is backed up by the universal legislation of the moral law and the harmonious cooperative pursuit of individuals for the highest good.

It is only in the context of an intersubjective framework of a community that we can legitimately speak of the universal legislation and practice of the moral law: Morality, strictly speaking, is not meant for particular groups alone but for the universal community of free human beings. The very basis of the categorical imperative as the universal law assumes, though this is nowhere clearly articulated by Kant, that the self-legislating individual is not an isolated individual but forms an integral part of the community. If not, there is no point in one agent legislating for others, as is implied in the universal formula. This is also the case with regard to the other formulations of the categorical imperative. Moral law cannot be an end-in-itself in sheer isolation, for then it loses its very meaning: The individual agent is to be more explicitly seen as a member of the human society. So also, 'humanity' derives only from community, for if there cannot be a community of human beings, in the Kantian sense, we cannot speak of the general characteristics of being human at all. The very fact that one makes universal laws as a member of the universal kingdom is explicitly communitarian in nature, as is the case with the third formulation of the categorical imperative.[24] Moreover, the nature of the universal law clearly implies that a moral agent left merely to oneself is not moral, and hence not human, as his or her self-sufficiency could be derived only in the intersubjective context of a community in which self-legislation is operative and effective.

The rational nature of man, endowed with a capacity for genuine interaction and relating, makes him a relational creature. The origination of obligation and duty which is so central to the moral law points to the necessity of more than a single individual.[25] Hence, social nature is not something added to human beings as part of his or her evolution. As Kant conceives it, "man by his very nature is a being meant for society."[26] It is the expression of our intellectual nature in the form of a community, which is not something externally forced upon us but another vital dimension of

---

[24]Even moral autonomy is not an individual autonomy but calls for intersubjectivity. See Kant, *Metaphysic of Morals*, Ak. VI, 454 (Gregor 122).

[25]Kant, *Metaphysic of Morals*, Ak. VI, 442 (Gregor 108).

[26]Kant, *Metaphysic of Morals*, Ak. VI, 471 (Gregor 143).

being consistently rational and moral, which, in turn, is destined for the realization of our social goals through a collective endeavour in the highest good.

Attainment of the highest good is the moral perfection not only of an individual but of humanity as a whole, and such a moral perfection is regarded as "the end of creation."[27] This envisions that individual members are not working for the realization of their mere subjective ends but, by obeying the moral law and cultivating a respect for all persons, there emerges a systematic harmony of purposes within such a community, whereby each member or lower-level community is enabled to go beyond its (instinctual or legal) boundaries so as to constitute a world community or, as Kant names it, a commonwealth, i.e., a community that incorporates "the whole of mankind."[28]

In order to facilitate both emergence and virtuous maintenance of a commonwealth, the "maxims of common human understanding" that Kant presents in the "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment" may be of help. "They are: (1) to think for oneself; (2) to put ourselves in thought in place of everyone else; and (3) always to think consistently."[29] Although these principles are implied in Kant's law of autonomy, by employing them one can not only guard oneself against errors but can certainly create a disposition for community; in fact, they may be said to be the rules for becoming human (as rational and relational) in a community. Thus, having the moral law at the heart of a community, it strives for the realization of virtue as the highest good, the ultimate realization of which can only be hoped to come in future, though our moral actions in accordance with the categorical imperative make us worthy of it.

Kantian moral approach to life indicates that there cannot be a bioethics that accepts different principles for different peoples and different times: moral law is universal; so too, none can exempt oneself from the moral law: that which is universal is also necessary. Moreover, the variations of the categorical imperative point out that the moral agent, who is capable of self-legislation, submits oneself to his/her own

---

[27]Kant, *Religion*, Ak. VI, 61 (Greene & Hudson 54).

[28]Kant, *Religion*, Ak. VI, 96 (Greene & Hudson 88).

[29]Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, §40, Ak. V, 294 (Bernard 136). It may be borne in mind that if the community were not included in the perspective of the self-legislating individual, autonomy could be arbitrary as well as detrimental to morality itself.

autonomous law, legislated and promulgated in view of the entire humanity: moral law is nothing extrinsic to human beings. Further, a moral person, being the foundation and epitome of morality, has to be always treated as an end, and never merely as a means. All these indicate, especially in the context of our concerns of bioethics, that none among human beings – whatever be the stage of its development or whatever be the condition of its existence – shall be used as a means for the furthering of the apparent good for other agents. This would include the foetus, the new born, the infant, the grown up/adult, the handicapped, the sick, the old and infirm, and the dying; so also this list would include the scientists who are engaged in various types of researches related to human life, medical and healthcare personnel, etc.

The questions such as 'to what extent can researches into human life shall proceed', Kantian philosophical initiative would instruct us that it shall in no way take away the humanhood of any one involved. For example, in stem cell researches, ultimately what happens is the extraction, manipulation, and use of the cells of a developing foetus, and the ultimate destruction of a human being at its early stages of existence: ultimately, a foetus is being used for another person's advantage. This definitively goes against Kantian injunction to treat everyone as an end and never a means; moreover, the life of a human person cannot be violated by manipulation, injury, or killing, as he or she is the source of the highest good, and it is only through the life of human beings that the highest good can be finally realized. To take another example of the surrogate motherhood in which a womb is rented or leased out for a sum of money: Again, it is immoral as the body of a woman is being used as a means for carrying the foetus to term. It is especially so, as the woman in fact makes herself available for another person/persons with a view to economic gain. Human cloning (both reproductive and therapeutic), if succeeded as it is being projected by scientists, also raises similar issues. In both cases, instead of the natural development of a person through the sexual reproductive means, human cloning attempts to *make* or *produce* human persons with a view to alleviate all the negative traits in the human genome, and improve the human race in terms of quality and physical excellence. Kantian approach, I believe, will not tolerate the treatment of a human person as a thing or property, being created through asexual means of reproduction; the imaginative possibility of replicating certain individuals as per the need (or whims and fancies) and availability of resources, is again morally challengeable. Even the therapeutic cloning meets with the danger of

treating a person – though made through asexual reproductive methods – merely as a means for the realization of certain ends of others.

All these shall not be exclusive and individual decisions arrived at by individual human beings; instead they should be moral decisions that we arrive at as members of a human community, the commonwealth of moral persons. In this process, the tips that Kant has given us should definitely be of assistance, as individuals have to exercise their responsibility in this regard. Of course, each one has (1) to think for oneself, (2) to arrive at every moral decision by taking into account everyone else, and (3) always to think consistently. If these are observed, by abiding by the universal and categorical imperative, we would definitely be capable of enhancing human life and remedy any damage that has been done to humanity in and through the novel techniques and scientific advancements that tend to downplay and exploit human life, even if it is in the case of a few individual human persons. If individuals, the society as a whole, the state governments, judiciary, research organisations, and medical personnel were to be aware of these principles, I hope, we will be able to improve and live a fully humane life within the web of human relationships, universally and necessarily.

7. Twinkling Hope: Community and Interdependence

The thriving of human life is possible in the twenty-first century only through the cooperative activity of human beings – although this may seem to be a mirage, an unrealizable fantastic ideal for ever. In fact, the human inventiveness that has characterised the contemporary world in many of its facets has been capable of ushering in a unitary world, a global village with dynamic networking of human as well as technical relationships. Although there are many undesirable and unwelcome attitudes, thoroughly manipulative strategies, and unhealthy practices, that tend to belittle this noble human leap towards a healthy and holistic existence in the globalised world of the present, the healthy trends have proved beyond doubt that interdependence is no more a theory or a sheer ideal, but a fact. In place of independence that had marked the modern times, interdependence has evolved to be the most obvious fact of a meaningful and effective mode of human existence. Thus, interdependence is the condition and quality of human existence in the contemporary world.

In the context of a human society, which by its nature is both intersubjective and interdependent, and from which none can exempt himself or herself, any human community must not allow either the newly formed lives in the womb or the dying persons about to move to the tomb – both being incapable of sustaining their lives without the active cooperation of others – to experience the burdensomeness, neglect, isolation, and alienation that often attends the human lives being experimented, aborted, or those undergoing the dying process. Not only in death, but also in birth, no one shall be isolated and alienated – the most dreaded situation faced by a human being who is part and parcel of a human community.

Further, whatever is the condition of another human being – in life or death – no one shall dare to initiate even an alienated decision-making process. No decision, not even a decision arrived at by a particular individual, shall be a humane decision if it is taken not by taking into account the entire humanity; that is what is implied by the universal dimension of the moral law. Hence, whether it is a decision of life – like, *in vitro* fertilisation, embryo transplantation, surrogate motherhood, or even cloning – or death – as in the case of abortion, allowing someone to die, or euthanasia – the universal moral implications are to be definitely taken into account. None of the above stated delicate and complicated human situations shall be approached as involving only a single individual or family: all of them are to be finally decided in view of the entire humanity, as no individual is an isolated one as far as moral life is concerned.

8. Conclusion

It is essential that we convincingly establish the need to evolve, support, and enhance a culture of life in the human society. The specific role of religions and states in this process is an obvious fact. However, the initiative and insistence should primarily ensue from individual human beings, who have to consciously design a perspective of life and carry out their lives to the extent of respecting, supporting, and ennobling the life of oneself and others with a view to further strengthen the foundations of human life, culture, and values. This requires that we are capable of integrating the 'ideal of science' (crystallised in genetic engineering, medical research and practice, etc.) and the 'ideal of personality'

(crystallised in the moral stand in which human person is accorded primacy).[30]

In fact, it is our conviction that human life cannot be lived, and a culture of life cannot be affirmed, promoted, and enhanced in the absence of mutual love and a passionate commitment: a love that is continuously expressed and mutually experienced between persons, and a firm, personal commitment that ensues from a trusting and self-giving person-to-person communion which, I am sure, would last forever as the springboard and cradle of a culture of life. All scientific advancements and technologies, theories and philosophies, therefore, can be approached only within the context of such a loving and caring relationship between or among individual human persons situated within the ambience of a community animated by universally applicable moral principles.

[30]If the ideal of science were given primacy, human person, especially his freedom, will have to be submitted to the laws of science regulated by the mechanical causality, which would result in declaring freedom as an impossible reality or a mere illusion altogether. On the other hand, if the ideal of personality were given primacy, naturally, the ideal of science would meet a fundamental limit and will have to be rejected as an overall ideal.

Journal of Dharma 34, 2 (April-June 2009), 267-273

BOOK REVIEWS

Roger Burggraeve, *Proximity with the Other: A Multidimensional Ethic of Responsibility in Levinas*, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2009, pages vi + 152, ISBN: 978-81-89958-26-8.

The prolific Leuven Levinas scholar Roger Burggraeve's Dharma Endowment Lectures at the Faculty of Philosophy of Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bangalore, in September 2009, appear in this volume, together with Levinas' 1987 paper 'Sociality and Money' and Burggraeve's own personal reminiscences of the philosopher. Burggraeve's decades long single minded pondering over Levinas' thought, personal associations with the thinker, and copious output in Levinasian scholarship are manifestly reflected in the lucidity of the exposition in the lectures. Clarity – not a small problem in coming to terms with Levinas' writings – is created very consciously through neat paraphrasing and coherent interpretation of Levinas' thought, attested with a series of right quotes in the right places. The referencing style gives the research-oriented reader accessibility to the philosopher's original writings in French and their English translations, whenever available. Though the reader might wonder why 'Sociality and Money' is included in this volume, this short and splendid piece of Levinas, which was first translated only in 2007, is thus quietly made accessible to the readers of Levinas in English. Moreover, as this review will show, there seems to be a definite logic which will allow the placing of this essay below Burggraeve's exposition. The personal testimonial does more than testifying, for it tells us about the extension of Levinas' ethics to the area of environmental ethics. This is important since the reader of Levinas today struggles to extend his relentless humanism of the other to nature and the non-human species. We get an opening on this matter from Levinas himself, although in the reported speech.

The lectures are primarily titled as *Proximity with the Other*. However, the thoughtful reader will not miss the import of the subtitle, 'A Multidimensional Ethic of Responsibility in Levinas', as the underlying theme of the explosion is a sympathetic reading of Levinas' political thought. The three lectures which form the first three chapters of the book are arranged in a rising order from subjectivity as freedom, the subject's response to the other as responsibility, to the subject's response to the third as political ethics. Levinas' attempt at decentring equality and liberty as the pillars of modern societies, and re-establishing its core as fraternity, is

© 2009 *Journal of Dharma: Dharmaram Journal of Religions and Philosophies* (Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bangalore), ISSN: 0253-7222

treated as a dangerous alternative by Howard Caygill in his *Levinas and the Political* (2002). For him, privileging fraternity over liberty and equality is actually to play with the most violently inflammable of the revolutionary triangle. In contrast to such interpretations, Burggraeve advances a most generous reading of Levinasian politics. The books opens with Levinas' dissatisfaction with the politics of being and identity that grips western political morality, based on the idea of individuality as the ground for the attempt at being, and proposes an escape from being, an embrace of the other and an attempt at building community with foundation on fraternity. This fraternity is not based on common humanity from which flows equality and liberty, but on the alterity of the other person and the justice that comes to play in the community of the self, the other and the third. Burggraeve asserts the need to go beyond the utopian Levinas, who insists on the non-reciprocal infinite responsibility of the self toward the other, because "his view on society and politics actually elevates his ethics to the level of the real" (74). Levinas' political philosophy is not an addendum to his philosophy of ethics; rather, it is the essential concretization of the ethics of the face-to-face and an integral part of his struggle to express the otherwise than being.

Burggraeve rightly spots the fundamental worry of Levinas as a victim of the most gruesome violence of the twentieth century: "to prevent the establishment of any one ethical good in the socio-political as an 'end term', so that the ethical good does not coagulate into a horrifying shape of evil" (92). Levinas was always awake to the fact that morality, especially in its political expression, can be defeated by moral fundamentalism – the disturbing fact that there can be a morally and religiously justifiable genocide, the 'terror of ethics', 'the perversion of the good'. Thus, the lectures of Burggraeve end by calling on the 'small goodness' and 'the modesty of ethics'. If ethics is the primary event (the first philosophy, the primal human encounter), social, economic, or political order cannot have the final word. Institutions, however just they are, cannot do everything, and so one needs to do one's small bit in one's own place and context. That is the modesty and tininess of ethics. "The small goodness opts for a partial, temporary, but real act of mercy towards the unique other. This relativity of goodness, which is not nothing but also not everything, is the antidote against the absolutising of goodness without thereby denying the importance of ethical goodness itself" (110).

Is Levinas' political ethics so benign that there is no place for revolution or violence in it? Those who think so have been surprised by

some of Levinas' public pronouncements. Without any reference to those pronouncements, Burggraeve brings into his painting of essential Levinas the ethical call to 'permanent revolution'. Being continuously awake to the evil hidden in the socio-political good that societies seek, we need to constantly challenge these structures "in order to see whether they still respond to their unconditional ethical task, namely the structural realisation of justice for everyone, both those who are near *and* far, in the present *and* the future" (90). Permanent revolution is the countering of 'the transformation of the good into evil'. In this process, violence is not altogether avoidable. Burggraeve notes that in the Levinasian ideal society 'certain objective and structural violence' (107) are not only unavoidable but also legitimate, because without them social justice cannot be made possible for all. He adds that such violence is to be avoided to the extent possible and should be surpassed by the single individual who stands for the unique other. In the moral universe, politics, which is the calculation of justice for everyone, is to be superseded by ethics that is born within one-to-one encounter. It is the individual's response to alterity. Hence, Levinas, according to Burggraeve, does not move one step away from Kantian ethical individualism.

I want to briefly refer to the conclusions of each of these three lectures. The first lecture, which analyses subjectivity, ends with the glum possibility that looms large on pushing freedom of the self too far: a Hobbesian society founded on mutual self-interest, maximum individual freedom and benefit, and the prospect of the power of the state that could check, restrict, and violate freedom for the sake of freedom. The next lecture begins with the alternative social vision of restriction of freedom on the basis of the ethics of alterity and the ideal of fraternity. But, this lecture ends with a suggestive look at 'dialogical personalism'. Burggraeve sees Levinas' personalism as multi-vocal – the person as 'I', as other, and as the third. The 'I' enters the analysis as being responsible for the other. In the conclusion of the last lecture, Burggraeve reads Levinas' ethics as a contribution to social personalism, the extension of the one-for-the-other to universal responsibility for all others, which is the foundation for community, society, state and politics. Hence, in this reading of Burggraeve's lectures, there is actually no reason why the essay of Levinas, 'Society and Money', should not be included below the lectures.

The personal testimonial, besides eulogizing the philosopher as if to justify the ethics that flows from his pen, gives us a glimpse into Levinas'

views on how his humanism of the other could apply to the non-human other. "Out of the analogy with the vulnerable human face, that forbids us to kill the other and appeals to us to do justice to the other, can we speak of an ethical relationship towards animals that does not make them suffer or kill them needlessly but treats them with respect and care" (134). Levinas' environmentalism is neither 'deep' nor post-human. At the same time, it is not mastery over creation that is proposed but stewardship and care for non-human reality based on the humanism of the other. Levinas' belief in technology for alleviating human suffering does not question, for example, the technological subjugation and oppression of nature.

Burggraeve's belief in the Levinasian ethical solution is overwhelming. He successfully makes clear the line of thought leading from the birth of ethics in the face-to-face to the role of this originary ethics in challenging and perfecting the search for the good in the socio-political sphere. Burggraeve, as an authentic Levinasian, fills in and organizes Levinasian ethics in such a way as to give it a sense of completion. His aim is to constantly extend and apply Levinas in various ways, and never to challenge, engage, or critique him.

The book is a very lucid presentation of Levinas' ethical and socio-political thinking. The splendid essay of Levinas included in the book confirms what the author argues, and the personal testimony opens up further vistas of Levinas' thought. It is warmly recommended to all interested in contemporary moral and political debates.

Siby K. George

Prema Vakayil, *Women Shall Prophecy (Joel 2:28): Anna, The Prophetess (Lk. 2:36-38) – A Study in Luke's Feminine Perspective*, Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 2007, pages: xv + 259, ISBN: 81-7086-417-8.

Just three verses from the Gospel of Luke (Lk. 2:36-38) and a book is born, which has the power to shake the foundation of the male dominated theology. Prema Vakayil's *Women Shall Prophecy* is a study of Anna, the prophetess, in Luke's feminine perspective. The author writes with a vision and conviction to portray Anna as a paradigm for the prophetic ministry of both women and men: for exercising their prophetic role by searching for and living according to God's word, as spoken with the realities of contemporary life, and to be spirit filled commentators of God's deed set in motion in Jesus. Though the promise of Prophet Joel that

"women shall prophecy" (Joel 2:28) finds full expression in the Acts of the Apostles during the Pentecost, the author emphasizes Anna as the prototype in whom the new gift of prophecy is emphasized. The book also outlines the fact that Anna, a woman prophesying in the temple, also makes a converging of large aspects of Lukan and New Testament theology.

This scholarly work by the author brings to light the biblical strategy of bringing about change of identity and transfiguration of a sociologically insignificant widow into a prophetess. The author has made a daring attempt to decode Anna from the three artistically woven words of St. Luke. The two main thrusts of this book are the theological concern and feminist concern.

Keeping in mind the three status symbols attributed to Anna by Luke, namely, women, widow, and prophetess, the author starts with the pairing technique based on the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of Apostles. The author pairs women with men, widows and prophetesses, and comes to significant conclusions which open up the way for further inquiry.

The second chapter tries to asses the place and significance of Anna in the social world of Luke-Acts. The author makes a study into the stratification of society in the Greco-Roman world and says that, in comparison with Jewish world, the position of women in both is rather positive. Though the position of widow in the social strata was nil, the author makes an interesting point by focusing on the Lukan stratification in which he makes a paradigm shift by giving importance to Anna, the widow. Thus, a new social stratification model is created by Luke and, then, we are led to the third chapter.

In the third chapter, the author carefully analyzes the key literary and thematic elements which Luke brings into this short narrative regarding Anna. It contains two models, namely, the widow model and prophetess model, which converge into the temple model depicting Anna as the model of the embodiment of the focal position of the temple in Luke.

In the fourth chapter, the author asks two important questions: "How did Luke devise the title of 'prophetic widow' to designate Anna? Has Luke combined two traditions: one prophetic and the other 'widow', leading to the milieu of the origin of Luke 2:36-38? These questions are discussed convincingly that any one who comes across this would come to the conclusion that Luke seems to have combined two milieus, one prophetic and the other Christian widowhood in the episode of Anna.

Focusing on the theological significance of Anna as a prophet widow, the author sets herself to the search of background of the mysterious figure of Anna and her functions. This discussion revolves around two main factors, namely, Anna's identity and her acknowledgment and proclamation regarding child Jesus.

The divine strategy of planning out great things to be done through simple and insignificant whom he empowers and strengthens is applied in the case of Anna by Luke. This chapter focus on Anna as the widow prophetess and is divided into two parts, the first dealing with little tradition in Luke and their theological convergence and second from widowhood to prophetic role. Clearly, that is a Lukan strategy from the feminine perspective.

Women shall Prophecy is a prophetic work by Prema Vakayil. The book is, indeed, a groundbreaking endeavour which can add more thrust and thirst to feminist theology. In a market driven economy, where the great and the extraordinary are considered great, by portraying Anna as playing a significant role, the author flashes the Christian message loud and clear. The ripples created by this book will remain not only in the present but also in the years to come, especially with regard to feminist theology.

Jeff Shawn Jose

S. K. Chakraborty and Debangshu Chakraborty, *Spirituality in Management: Means or End?* New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2008, ISBN: 978-0-19-569223-5.

The Combined work of S. K. Chakraborty and Debangshu Chakraborty *Spirituality in Management: Means or Ends?* is a unique and authentic work on management on the basis of Indian spirituality. Spirituality pervades every sphere, be it business, management, governance, healthcare, or any other secular engagement. This book explores and analyses how spirituality can stall degenerative trends in these areas.

Spirituality in Management provides us with deep insights into some of the authentic versus pseudo concerns in recent engagements with spirituality. The authors provide glimpses of the deep-structure relationship between ethically healthy performance and spirituality. As for the contents of the book, the chapters are largely independent pieces. However, the connecting thread of spirituality strings them together. The one unique lesson from Bharatvarsha's tryst with spiritual religion is first

to discover the divine within and then to manifest it without. Likewise, the content of the book can be distinguished between the directions to a leader and to the leader to lead.

The book presents the topic in a logical manner. It starts by justifying the need of spirituality by discussing some of the common doubts and problems on the importance of spirituality in organization. The volume is enriched with illustration from the long history of spirituality and great personalities. The authors take a holistic approach to management by including all the aspects of leadership.

This work is made on the basis of ethics, human and business values, and spirituality. It stresses on human relationships in the workplace. The book is very relevant in this century, as the overriding mantra of the day seems to be "If character is lost, nothing is lost; if wealth is lost everything is lost." Here the authors place the ball *niskama karma* and its priority. The authors develop a sustainable economics by holding fast to these values.

The book provides detailed information about different sources that are used for the study of spirituality in management. Throughout the text numerous real-life and contemporary examples of spirituality-in-action illustrate the principles highlighted in the volume. This book is, first and foremost, an experimental journey for the sacred in a secular world.

The approach of the book is well referred and authentic. It offers critical insights in spirituality-in-action that will be useful for leaders and managers of enterprises, scholars, and researchers in management, sociology, and psychology, and post-graduate students in this area.

Spirituality in Management: Means or End? is, indeed, a praiseworthy attempt to link spirituality and management. The simple language and the interesting way of presenting the principles make this dearer to the readers.

Jestin Cheeramvelil

JOURNAL OF DHARMA

Dharmaram Journal of Religions and Philosophies

Forthcoming Issues

2009, Vol. 34:

3. Politics of Violence and Religion
4. Re-emergence of Religion

2010, Vol. 35:

1. Contemporary Responses to Pluralism
2. Religion and Democracy
3. Religious Truth and Analytic Philosophy
4. Redeeming Religion and Ethics

International Indexing: ***Journal of Dharma*** is indexed in *Religion Index One: Periodicals*, Chicago; in *Arts & Humanities Citation Index* (A&HCI) and *Current Contents/Arts & Humanities* (CC/A&B) of the Institute of Scientific Information (ISI), University City Science Center, Philadelphia, PA 19104; in *Philosopher's Index*, Philosopher's Information Center, 1616 E. Wooster St., Bowling Green University, OH 43402; in *ATLA Religion Database*, 300 S. Wacker Dr., Suite 2100, Chicago, IL 60606; *Religion Indexes*, 5600 South Woodlawn Ave., Chicago, IL. 60637; in *Bowker Serials Bibliographies*, 1180 Avenue of the Americas, NY 10036; in *Science of Religion* published by Root and Branches, Cambridge, England.

Microfilms: University Microfilms International, Michigan, Religious & Theological Abstracts: Myerstown, PA 17067.

Website: www.dharma.dvk.in

Email: dharma@dvk.in

Subscription Rates

(Effective from January 2010)

Annual Subscription:

India	Rs. 250.00
All Other Countries (Air Mail)	$40.00

Advance Subscription for Three Years:

India	Rs. 600.00
Other Countries (Air Mail)	$100.00

Foundation Subscription (Life Membership):

India	Rs. 10,000.00
Other Countries	$1000.0 (or its equivalent)

Single Copy:

India

Current Issue	Rs. 75.00
Back Issue	Rs. 100.00

Other Countries (Air Mail) (bulk orders will have special reduced prices)

Current Issue	$20.00
Back Issue	$25.00

Payment is to be made in favour of "**Journal of Dharma, Bangalore.**"
Payments and other subscription related communications may be sent to:
The Managing Editor
Journal of Dharma, Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram,
Bangalore 560 029, India.

Editorial Correspondence:

All manuscripts for publication should be sent in electronic format (preferably in MS Word format); entries for consideration should be scientifically documented with notes (MLA style). Digital copy shall be sent to:

The Chief Editor
Journal of Dharma, Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram
560 029 Bangalore, India
E-mail: saju@chackalackal.com
Fax: +91-80-4111 6000

All business correspondence should be addressed to:

The Managing Editor
Journal of Dharma, Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram
560 029 Bangalore, India
E-mail: dharma@dvk.in

Reg. No. R.N. 27399/75 ISSN: 0253-7222

DHARMARAM VIDYA KSHETRAM

Pontifical Athenaeum of Philosophy, Theology and Canon Law

Programmes Offered During 2010-11

I. FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY

1. Diploma in Philosophy
2. Bachelor of Philosophy (BPh) cum BA (Honours) Philosophy (3 Years)
3. Licentiate in Philosophy (LPh) with areas of specialization (a). Systematic Philosophy, (b). East West Philosophical Studies (c). Inter-religious Studies
4. Doctoral Programme (PhD)

II. FACULTY OF THEOLOGY

1. Diploma in Theology and Religious Sciences for Sisters (Jnanodaya)
2. Bachelor of Theology (BTh)
3. Licentiate in Theology (LTh) with areas of specialization (a). Biblical Theology, (b). Systematic Theology , and (c). Moral Theology
4. Doctoral Programme in Theology (ThD)

III. INSTITUTE OF ORIENTAL CANON LAW

1. Diploma in Oriental Canon Law,
2. Certificate in Latin and Oriental Canon Law and
3. Licentiate in Oriental Canon Law (LOCL)

IV. INSTITUTE OF SPIRITUALITY AND COUNSELLING

1. MA in Formative Spirituality and Counselling
2. One Year Diploma Course in Spirituality and Counselling

FACILITIES

- DVK Central Library with a collection of 100,000 books, 30,000 bound volumes, 500 periodicals, Digital Library, Digital Work Station, Internet Access and A/C Multimedia Hall for Seminars and Presentations
- Partial scholarships to deserving PG students and Rev. Sisters
- International Journals: *Journal of Dharma*, *Asian Horizons*, and *Vinaya Sadhana*
- Hostel facilities on the campus for PG students and Rev. Sisters
- Cafeteria and Banking services on the campus

For application forms and details, please contact:

Registrar, Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bangalore - 560 029

Phone: (080) 4111 6302, 4111 6333; Fax (080) 4111 6000

E-mail: registrar@dvk.in; Web www. dvk.in

Published by
Dharma Research Association
Centre for the Study of World Religions
Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, 560 029 Bangalore, India

Visit Journal of Dharma at www.dharma.dvk.in

Printed at
National Printing Press
560 095 Bangalore, India